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ILLUSTRATED STORIES

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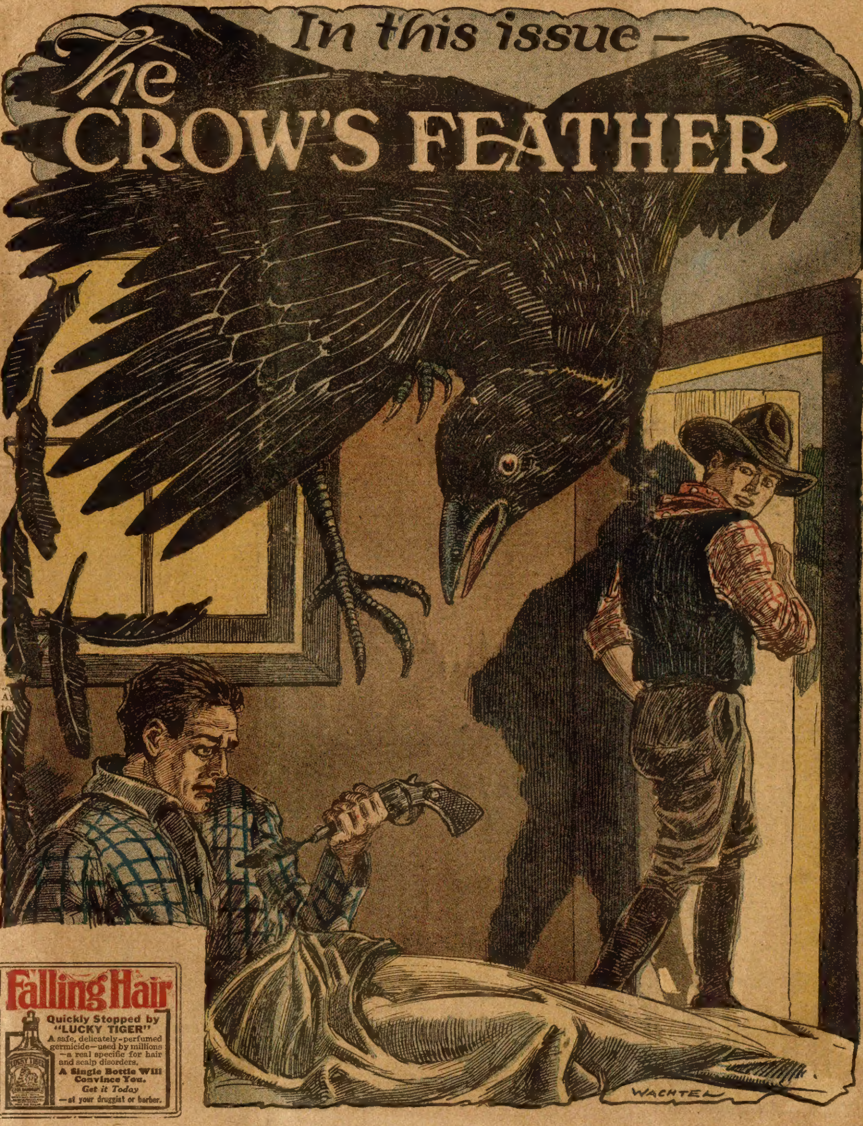
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A Slip in the Dance

By Mendel M. Solomon

FOR the third time Walter Lawson spread the letter on the desk and read the crisp message of half a dozen lines. He sat forward tensely, his hands trembling as he opened the crumpled sheet. Then he leaned back, staring vacantly at the opposite wall of the office. Lifting a hand, he ran it nervously thru his hair, which was slightly gray at the temples. Then he rose slowly and walked over to the window, looking with unseeing eyes into the busy street below.

For a long time he stood there, reviewing the series of happenings which had ended with the sudden crash. It had come like a bolt from the blue—leaving him helpless. Strange, he reflected bitterly, that he should grope for a way out. Scores of times he had presided at committee meetings and dominated the gathering by his convincing arguments of the business in which he was regarded as a powerful leader.

Turning, he paced the office apprehensively. Suddenly he stiffened. His eyes narrowed to a slit and his hands clinched until the knuckles showed white. A moment later he was calm and collected. Reaching for the letter, he struck a match and watched the flames as they consumed the paper. Then he cleared his throat and settled in the chair. A pleasant smile covered his face as he reached for the button.

"I'd like to see Mr. Davis," he informed the young lady who appeared at the door. She nodded and withdrew. Lawson reached for a cigar and leisurely applied a match.

"Come," he called as a knock sounded.

Edgar Davis, treasurer of the Lawson-Speed Lumber Company, walked in. He was a quiet, middle-aged man. "You want to see me, Mr. Lawson?"

"Yes. Sit down, Davis. Smoke?"

As the other shook his head Lawson leaned back. "I believe you go to Daleton tonight, don't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Figured your pay roll yet?"

"Why, yes, Mr. Lawson. I finished it a few minutes ago."

"What does it amount to this week?"

"Something over fifteen thousand dollars."

Lawson removed the cigar from his mouth and regarded it steadily. Then he looked across at Davis.

"You'll need more than that this week."

"More than that?" The treasurer's eyes opened in surprise. "I don't understand. I checked it twice to make sure."

"I'm not doubting your figures, Davis." Lawson smiled faintly. "That isn't the point." Flicking the ashes from his weed he leaned forward. "This is confidential. Understand?"

The other nodded, a puzzled expression on his face.

"As you know, Mr. Speed has been out of the city for the past two weeks," went on Lawson. "He's due back in the morning, but I can't wait for him. Big Stevens, the superintendent at the mill, was in the office this morning. I don't know whether you are aware of the fact, but the Hodges people, whose mill is just a few miles down the river, have stirred up a hornet's nest. They have landed a tremendous northern order and are going to work night and day. They've sent out men to look for labor. Don't you see what that means?"

"Yes, sir." Davis nodded. "It means that we stand a chance to lose part of our force."

"Exactly. And that's impossible at this time. We've got specifications on three orders and it's going to take steady digging to make deliveries on time." Lawson's fist smashed the desk top. "We can't take chances, Davis. It's a matter of thousands of dollars to our company. I knew about the Hodges people landing this order. But I didn't dream that they'd attempt to hire our men. Stevens found out about it. He says we've got to pay more wages or lose the men. And now of all times we can't cripple the force."

"I understand, Mr. Lawson. And I appreciate you telling me this. I haven't been with the company all these years without having its interest at heart."

"I'm glad to hear that, Davis. I don't doubt your loyalty. Otherwise I wouldn't mention this to you. But to get back to the pay roll. I'm inclined to think Stevens is right."

"It's the sensible plan," agreed Davis.

"NOW," continued Lawson, "it's going to take about ten thousand dollars this week to meet the increase. I know it's tough," as the other's eyes widened, "but it's got to be done. Safety first. You'll have to take twenty-five thousand dollars with you to Daleton tonight. I'm taking the bull by the horns in this matter, Davis. I'd have wired Speed this morning but there's no chance of reaching him that way. He's on the train now coming from New York and won't get here until tomorrow."

Davis looked at his watch. "One fifteen now. I'll have to hurry over to the bank before it closes."

"One more thing," called Lawson as the treasurer rose. "The Hodges people won't begin work on their order until next Monday. Stevens learned that yesterday. I want to beat them at their own game. We'll raise our men's pay before they are offered more to work for Hodges. See what I'm driving at? We'll leave a pleasant taste in their mouths—make them think their efforts are appreciated. Ten to one, even if the other people should offer more money next week our men won't consider it."

Davis nodded, his hand on the knob. "Not a bad idea, Mr. Lawson."

Lawson rose. "We've got to keep this under out hat. I don't want the Hodges people to know about the raise. Now make out your check for ten thousand and hurry over to the bank."

Davis turned, his face brightening. "How does this hunch sound, Mr. Lawson? A check for that amount came in the mail this morning from Sturgis. Why not use that? We can explain to Mr. Speed in the morning. He'll understand that we are trying to keep this move quiet."

"A cracking good idea, Davis," agreed Lawson heartily. "And I'm going to have a little talk with Speed about you. Personally, I think we can well afford to raise your salary."

The other smiled happily. "Thanks, Mr Lawson. It certainly will come in handy at this time."

As the door closed behind the treasurer Lawson whipped out a handkerchief and wiped his forehead. He sank into the chair, his breath coming in short puffs as tho he had just finished a hard run.

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(Continued on Page 11.)

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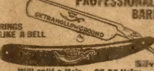

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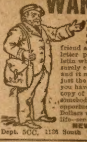

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The CROW'S FEATHER

By Frederick Davis

DEPUTY SHERIFF KENT twirled the jet feather in his stubby fingers, scowled at it, and passed it across the bewhittled desk to Sheriff Amsley. Amsley frowned at it and stuck it in a row of ten others behind the edge of a brilliant calendar which was tacked on the picture-plastered wall.

"Kent," the sheriff said, hooking his thumbs behind his broad belt, "I reckon you and I have decided that the Crow has robbed his last dollar and shot his last man in this county!"

"Bet your boots we have!" Deputy Kent answered grimly. "Nobody this side of the Rio Grande hankers to get his paws on that crow-man more'n I do. I'm sick o' his makin' a fool of us. Last night was the last straw. I shore wants a heap to chain that hombre in that ol' caboose of ours. Men the likes o' him ought to be——" His fierce gesture signified that Deputy Kent thought no punishment too severe for the outlaw. "He's plumb bad!"

Sheriff Amsley nodded in agreement. "The express company'll be raggin' the ears off'n us because the Crow flew away with their five-thousand-dollar package, right under our noses. When I think o' him hid away somewheres, countin' his stolen money and laughin' at us, I get red-hot inside me. Now looky here, Kent. We got to move quick—we're in a way to get him. Listen to what I mean."

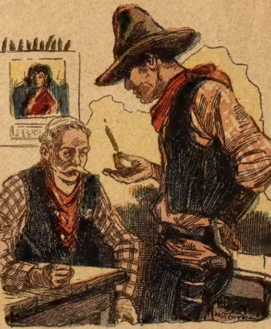
The Crow had swooped down on Still Corners many times during the past month, as the row of ebon feathers on the wall testified. The cunning outlaw always left at the scene of his plunder his personal calling-card—a tail-feather of a crow. This distinctive mark identified the deeds of the unknown man—the Crow had left it even at times when seconds were precious—when a lagging moment during his get-away might have thrown him into the law's groping hands. "I reckon he's superstitious," Sheriff Amsley had decided about these emblems. "He leaves a crow feather behind for good luck, so's we won't get him." And the remarkably good luck which these feathers seemed to bring the Crow added to Amsley's and Kent's anger. Not even their most determined efforts had enabled them to corner the shrewd outlaw.

The Crow had stolen money wherever money was available, to an intolerable extent and with such exasperating ease that Sheriff Amsley, Deputy Kent and their undermen were infuriated by their impotence. Frequently the cowmen at Still Corners greeted them with: "Somebody got you fellers' hands tied?" or "Gettin' a commission on the Crow's rake-offs?" Amsley coldly ignored the innuendoes, but Kent's fury, and his hatred for the hidden outlaw, grew. Only a week previous the Crow, black-masked, had stepped alertly into the Brown Jug and a moment later had stepped out again with all the loose money of the Brown Jug in his pockets. He had streaked away into the night; Kent determinedly had followed his trail, but had lost it. Incensed by this daring attack, Sheriff Amsley had instructed three deputies to scour the territory outside Still Corners and to hunt with all possible diligence for the Crow. And, when the deputies had jogged grimly away, the Crow had seized upon this beautiful opportunity and had again appeared in town!

Having been notified that a valuable package, destined for a nearby bank, was to be received at the express station that evening, Sheriff Amsley and Deputy Kent had stationed themselves outside the office, to guard it against a possible attack of the Crow. Nothing had happened—until a cherry glow had jumped into the darkness, and teeth of flame had begun to eat into a home standing not far away. Amsley had run to put the fire out, cautioning Kent to remain at the express office door in case it had been set by the Crow as a ruse to draw them away and leave the office unguarded. The shrewd outlaw had slipped unseen to a rear window, and, by threatening Wilson, the clerk inside, with a revolver, had forced him to open the window and to hand out the sealed packet of currency and negotiable bonds. Wilson had attempted to sound an alarm: The Crow had sent a bullet from a silenced gun into the clerk's shoulder, and had slipped back into the night with a loot of five thousand dollars before Kent, entering in response to a cry from Wilson, had found the clerk writhing on the floor—with a tail-feather of a crow close beside him! The robbery of the express office was the most daring and the most outrageous of the long list of the Crow's heinous crimes—it provoked Sheriff Amsley and Deputy Kent to desperate action.

"The other deputies who are already nosin' around out yonder won't let the Crow roost anywhere—they'll keep him hoppin' around," the sheriff told Kent, outlining his plan. "Now, you mosey over to the express office and pick up a trail. The Crow must 'a' left one this time—ground's soft. I'll linger here, and deputize a dozen cowmen. I'll make 'em responsible for scarin' the Crow plumb out o' comin' to town again. With us lookin' sharp, and with the other deputies keepin' the Crow stirred up out yonder, you ought to be able to spot him. I hanker to see that black bird with his wings clipped!"

"No more'n I do," Kent agreed. "I shore's mustard get sick to my stummick when I think of that flee-bit crow-man existin' in the same country with us. I'm itchin' to chase the ornery critter clean off'n the earth, I am! I'd like to shoot the head plumb off'n his black body, the squawkin' bird o' Satan——!" Deputy Kent nestled his big six-shooter in his palms. He spoke to it fondly, as he often did. "You 'n' me, ol' gat," he said, "have got a job on our hands. We got to get that ugly bird they calls the Crow—no mistake—we got to get him. He's the lowest-down, worthlessest, sneakenest varmint that ever crawled, and we got to get——"



"Nobody this side of the Rio Grande hankers to get his paws on that crow-man more'n I do," vowed Deputy Kent, but read what happens when he sets out to do that same! There's a surprise for you.

A KNOCK at the door interrupted him. A young man, smiling broadly, tipped his Stetson far back on his flaxen head and nodded genially.

"Hello, and a very good morning," he greeted grandiloquently. "I want to inquire if you will please direct me to the road to Woodhole?"

Kent began to tell him. "You take that road yonder——"

"I'm on my way to Woodhole," the young man interrupted smilingly, "and that's the reason I'm asking how to get there. I haven't anything special to do at Woodhole, but I've got bad lungs and I've got to keep outside and traveling around. I'm on my way to Woodhole now, and that's why I'm asking you—which way it is to Woodhole?"

Kent blinked and began again: "You take that road yonder——"

"That road over there?" the young man broke in again. "That road goes to Woodhole, does it? So that's the road to Woodhole! Well, I've been hunting for it. I'm glad to find it, because I'm on my way to Woodhole now. I haven't anything special to do there, but I'm on my way—that's the reason I asked you which way is it to Woodhole. Well, I'm much obliged to you!"

He saluted broadly, and, still smiling, swung atop an aged pinto, whose boney head was drooping over a water-trough outside the sheriff's door, and rambled away.

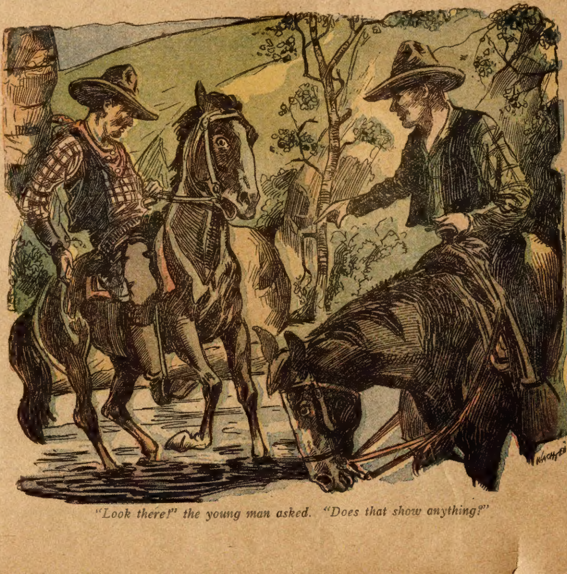
"Well I'll be danged!" Kent grinned. "I didn't tell him what he asked to know—he didn't give me a chancet! If he follows that road either way he'll never get to Woodhole a-tall—he's got to turn, o' course. Looks like that old nag o' his might fall to pieces any minute, too!" Kent rose. "When I mosey back, Sher'f, I hope I have the Crow bagged." He grimly opened and closed his stubby fingers. "Once I close them hooks on him he'll never get away again!"

On his cayuse, Deputy Kent rode down the sunny path to the squat red shack which was the express office. He swung down and began inspecting the soft earth in the rear of the structure. He circled, searching for a string of hoof-prints swerving away. Not far on he found a roughed area, and a sharply deflecting line of hoof-prints. He squatted on his spurs and studied the marks. Against the impression of one horseshoe was an irregular indentation, which recurred regularly in the prints as Kent advanced. "A stone was caught inside the pony's shoe," Kent knew—and that made trailing easy. "I'll just trail along and see where I nose out."

With his cinnamon cayuse again between his knees and his eyes directed at the soft ground, he followed the train of prints. It swerved away, but soon it curved back again to the road. "Funny business here!" Kent exclaimed. "That's the Crow's trail, sure's mustard." Among the confused impressions in the road the trail sometimes was lost, but Kent never failed to find it again. Soon, as he advanced, he heard a hail. Looking up, he saw in the road, on the senile pinto, the smiling young man who had knocked at the door of the sheriff's office.

"Hello, there!" the young man greeted. "This is the road to Woodhole, isn't it? Say, are you going to Woodhole? I'm going to Woodhole, too, you know—haven't anything special to do there, but I'm on my way. I've got to travel around for the air—I've got bad lungs. I hope you're going there, too, because then we could go along together. Are you going to Woodhole, too?" Leaving no time for Kent to answer, he spilled out more questions. "Say, what's that star pinned on your shirt? It's a deputy sheriff's star, isn't it? Are you a deputy sheriff? I saw you looking at the ground all the way along the road—you must be following an outlaw's trail or something. Are you? Are you following an outlaw's trail?" The young man waited with shining eyes for an answer. Kent looked at him wearily.

"I reckon I can't answer all them questions, young



"Look there!" the young man asked. "Does that show anything?"

feller." At once he disliked the other. He did not want the garrulous young man's company. "I'm not goin' to Woodhole, so there's no use waitin' for me. I like to jog along slow."

The young man ignored the hint. "Well," he said, "I like to jog along slowly, too. Isn't that nice? We can jog along slowly together!"

Kent frowned. "Stranger, I'm on business. I reckon I'd better go on alone."

But again the younger man was not deterred. "Business? That makes it all the better. I'm awfully interested in the kind of work sheriffs and detectives do. I think it's exciting. I like it because it's so different from the kind of work I want to do myself. I want to be a minister. I went to a theological school in Boston, but my lungs went bad and I had to leave before I could be ordained. I'm going back some day to be ordained. Ordained a minister, that is. That's what I want to be—a minister. I'm awfully interested in seeing you work—because it's so different, you see."

Kent thought, "Jumpin' Jehosephat! Does he think he has to repeat things forty times so's I can understand 'em?"

"You don't mind if I come along with you, do you?" the other asked.

Kent groaned. He disliked to refuse the eager young fellow, and saw no way of ridding himself of the other anyway; so he grudgingly admitted: "Aw, well, come on!"

"Thank you!" said the young man. "Since we're going along together we ought to know each other's names, oughtn't we? It wouldn't do to go on riding along together without knowing each other's name, would it? Well, let's exchange names, then. My name's Rosson—what's yours?"

"Gabriel Moses," Kent sighed.

"I'm glad to know you, Mr. Moses," young Rosson said seriously. "I think we're going to be good friends."

KENT moaned again. He studied a moment the smooth features of the young man. He guessed Rosson's age at twenty-two or three, tho Rosson's eyes were old, and keen, and deep. Kent heeled his cayuse into a gentle pace and kept his eyes following the hoof imprints in the road. All the while Rosson's speech rambled on.

"Your work resembles mine, you know," he discoursed in part. "We're both doing the Lord's work. Ministers try to make the people be good, and sheriffs punish them if they're bad. That's the reason I'm so interested in your work. It's like mine, but still it's different. I'd like to watch you, if you don't mind. You don't mind if I watch you, do you?"

"I said no, once!" Kent snapped, exasperated by the unending talk.

"I'm glad you don't mind," said the young man blithely. "Because I'm interested in your kind of work. Is being a deputy sheriff exciting? I think that being a deputy sheriff must be exciting. You're following a trail now, aren't you? I've never seen anybody follow a trail before. Whose trail is it? I heard about the robbery last night, and that the man who did it is somebody they call Mr. Crow. Are you following Mr. Crow's trail?"

"Stranger," Kent moaned, "I'm havin' an all-powerful hard time keepin' my mind on my business."

"Well, that's too bad," Rosson answered, apparently missing the point entirely. "It's always best to keep one's mind on one's business if one can—anybody knows that. Maybe I can help you. My lungs are bad, but my brain is all right. Why don't you take a nap by the side of the road and let me go on trailing Mr. Crow for you?"

Kent laughed outright. "Young feller, the Crow is a tough proposition. He's an all-fired dangerous man. If you tried foolin' around with him he'd likely kill you."

Rosson was quieted somewhat. "Well, I wouldn't want to meet a man like that, I'm sure."

"Bet your boots you wouldn't! He's bad clear thru, the measley critter—bad! I shore hates such a coward as him! He hides his ugly face and sneaks up and sticks up people with guns, and then he runs away with the money they been workin' hard to get. He's as ornery and as sly as a fox. If you went pesterin' him, young feller, he'd kill you shore. I reckon he would! I know that if he gets a chance he'll kill me."

"Dear me!" said Rosson, apparently much perturbed. "He must be a highly dangerous man. The Lord will help you, tho. In the Bible it is written, 'The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.'"

"I hope the Lord will help me!" Kent said fervently. "I'll need all the help I can get to land that bird of the devil!"

As they went on, Kent endeavored to apply his mind to the trail, but he was continually distracted by the incessant chatter of Rosson. Finally he reached the limit of endurance. "This has got to stop!" he decided. "I've got to get rid of that talkin'-machine!" So he suddenly slipped off his cayuse and pretended to see something of immense importance in a hoofprint. He studied the mark closely while Rosson dismounted and watched with deep interest. After measuring the impression carefully with a twig, Kent straightened and declared with assumed excitement:

"Now I know what kind of a hoss the Crow rides! It's a gray pinto with white spots and it's three years old and it was born in Nebraska and it's got one ear clipped! I can tell from that hoof-print! That's val'ble information, and the sher'ff ought to hear it pronto! Young feller, you said you wanted to help me," Kent put heavy earnestness into his question: "Do you mean it?"

"I do," Rosson answered gravely.

"Then put your hoss between your knees and scoot back to the Sher'ff's office and tell him what I found!"

"I'll do it!" the young man declared determinedly. He jumped into his saddle, whirled his aged pony and, waving his hand grandly to Kent, sailed back toward Still Corners.

Kent grinned as he watched Rosson disappear in a bubble of dust at the horizon. He told himself jubilantly, "Thanks Jehosaphat I can trail in peace now!" He rode on, again closely following the marks which the Crow had made. Soon the trail veered off the road and ran parallel to a crystal creek. And at last the hoofprints turned into the water and disappeared. Kent chanced that the Crow had gone up the creek. In the middle of the stream he heeled his cayuse at intervals while his sharp eyes searched the bushed banks for signs of the previous horseman's departure. He had proceeded deliberately a quarter of a mile when a loud splashing shout sounded behind.

"Oh, h—l!" he groaned, as he turned in his saddle. "It's that phonygraph again!"

Rosson halted his wet pinto close beside Kent's, smiling proudly with the achievement of his quick delivery of the news to the sheriff. "I told the sheriff. He seeemd to do a good deal of thinking about it, too!"

Again attempting to get rid of Rosson, Kent suggested, "Well, you should 'a' waited for his answer!"

"But," Rosson objected, "he said there wasn't any answer!"

KENT gave it up. "It's no use," he thought. "I guess I've got to put up with the blamed tenderfoot." The matter of refinding the Crows' trail absorbed him again. As the two horses stepped thru the water gingerly, Kent eyed both sides of the creek—and silently swore, for Rosson gibbered on constantly.

"Look there!" the young man asked. "Does that show anything?" He pointed to a bush which was growing in the crack of a wide, flat bowlder banking the creek: A single twig had been freshly broken and was hanging limp to the stem.

"Jumpin' goose-eggs!" Kent exclaimed. "Does it show anything? It shows that the Crow left the crick over that rock so's he wouldnt' leave any footprints—he broke that twig in passing. I'm right glad you saw that stranger!" Kent eyed the young man in a new light, thinking perhaps Rosson was pretty fine stuff after all—but wishing, nevertheless, that he would stop talking now and then. "Come on," the deputy invited, and sent his pony over the rock after the trail of the Crow.

Hoofprints, rocks pushed aside, damp leaves overturned, one after another indicated the passage of a horseman not many hours previous thru the woods which bordered the creek. Kent eagerly followed the trail—but after a time his exhilaration gave way to an intense irritation, caused by the constant chattering of Rosson. Kent appreciated the aid Rosson had given him, but hearing the episode explained and re-explained and re-explained again was unendurable.

"I thought maybe that broken twig meant something," Rosson proudly repeated the twentieth time. "When I saw it hanging there I knew something had broken it off, and I thought, well, maybe Mr. Crow broke it off as he went along there. So I thought, maybe I'd say something about it——" and on and on ad finitum.

"Say!" Kent ejaculated desperately. "Ain't your jaw tirin' out?"

"No," Rosson answered innocently. "Why should it? I'm not chewing anything."

Kent swore silently. "It's no use tryin' to tell that chatterbox to shut up," he thought. "I've got to get rid of him somehow, and get rid of him quick—because the trail is gettin' hot enough to be a serious matter. If this jawin' keeps up I'll be so weak that if I meet the Crow he'll knock me down with a sneeze. And I reckon he could hear me comin' a mile off with that noise-maker shootin' around all the time. By golly, the danged word-chawin' tenderfoot is worse'n a convention of old-maid monkeys! I got to get rid o' him, that's all!"

Accordingly he swung off his horse again and eyed closely the damp convex impression in the earth of a small rock which lay overturned. Kent even sniffed at the earthy dimple. To judge from the worried expression of his features as he looked up, this was a terribly grave matter. "Stranger," he explained solemnly, "I've got to scout around because I suspicion that the Crow clumb into the tree here and worked ahead a piece without touchin' the ground—so's to throw us off his trail, you see—but if I lose this here mark, I might lose the trail complete. I can't afford to lose it now, so you got to help me again. You stay in this spot while I mosey after the trail out yonder. When I whistle, that means you come on after me."

"Fine!" Rosson agreed eagerly. "I'm glad to help!"

Grinning covertly as he led his cayuse, Kent swerved into the thicknesses of the woods. "Reckon the tenderfoot'll stay watchin' that stone until Gabriel toots his horn if he lingers for me to call him!" he laughed. And as soon as the intervening trees partitioned the young man from him, he circled and silently returned to his front line of advance. He searched long and diligently and found a hoofprint of the Crow's pony. Exultant, he trailed on.

The Crow's trail was promising now! Pausing, Kent cuddled his pet six-shooter in his palms again. "Get ready for work, old gat," he whispered to it softly. "Something's going to happen soon. I feel an itchin' in my bones that somethin's going to happen. The minute I point you at that Crow-hombre, old gat, you tear loose and plug him—because he needs pluggin' good and pluggin' plenty. 'At's the good old boy." He slipped the weapon into its case again and edged forward eagerly.

Before him a rocky ridge curled past, running thru the thickening forest; and beyond the cliff only old-blue sky and the purplish horizon of an expansive plain were visible. Kent slowly climbed the gentle ascent, sometimes grasping the corners of the granite bowlders before him, and stepping gingerly so as not to displace the smaller stones, the noise of which might sound an alarm of his approach. As he reached the crest of the rock ledge he crawled on all fours—and found the broad view of plain and sky opened to him. Before him the cliff dropped thirty feet; spotted with green and gray and streaked with crimson, huge rocks lay at its base. Below, too, a circular spot of gray ashes lay—where a fire had burned not long ago. There the Crow had hidden! Kent's eyes danced. He must go down at once. As he moved toward a path of descent, the rocks, warming in the sun, felt hot to his palms. Suddenly his motions froze. From the rock beside him came a warning——

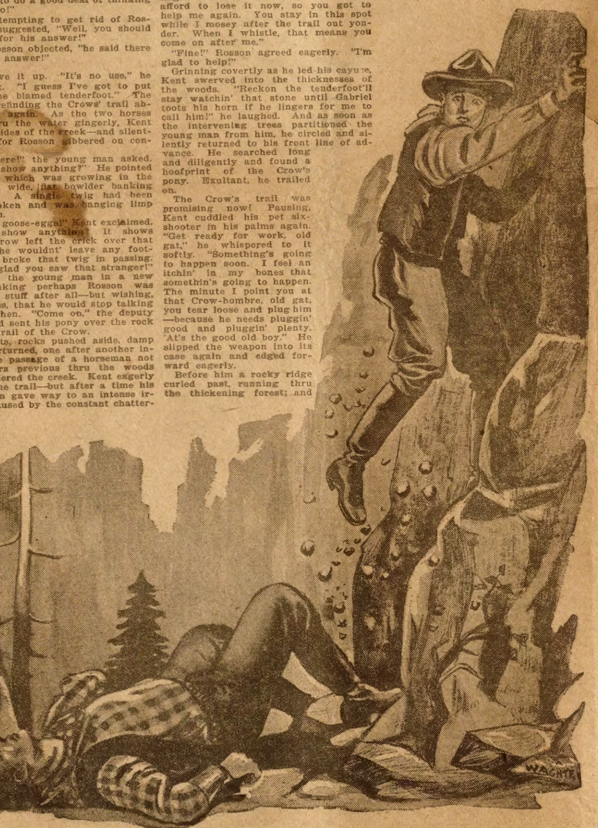
"Wwrrrr!"

Rattlesnakes! flashed thru Kent's brain. He caught the briefest glance of it—coiled and copper and green, sunning on the warm rocks—while he hastily swung his right hand toward his six-shooter. But his weight was on his arms—he did not move quickly enough. The copper coil flashed straight. A sting jumped into Kent's right thigh—and he knew that the deadly fangs of the snake had sunk there.

VIOLENTLY he jerked—and pushed instinctively away with his arms. The rock in front of him rolled loose—it tottered and tumbled over the ledge. Kent's weight had been supported by it; he fell forward—tumbled headlong—and, groping wildly, striking once against the side of the cliff, he went hurtling thru space to the rocks below.

He lay stunned. Vaguely he felt a

(Continued on Page 16.)



An avalanche of pebbles came pelting down the steep side of the ridge.

THE DRY LAND SAILOR

BY STANLEY S. SCHNETZLER

Uncle thought he knew women; so did Phillip. But neither one of them knew Edith, all of which goes to prove that a little poetry is a dangerous thing—especially for uncles.

FOR years, Philip Standish was only a toothless buzz-saw in the workshop of Life. He whirled constantly, but sawed no wood. He dreamed deep-sea dreams, but stayed on dry land to do his sailing. In all this, his parents were at fault. They had too much money.

Countless golden moments in countless worthless days he spent contemplating such a commonplace matter as a trip to New York. Phil was afraid he'd never really make the trip. He was certain it didn't matter. He enjoyed dreaming about it. That was enough.

Then Edith Royce decided he'd accept his Uncle Philip's offer to come to New York and go to work. Three days later he was on his way.

No one but Edith could have done it, for no one had Edith's unique qualifications. In the first place she had done everything Phil dreamed of doing—and never told him about it. She had cruised the world. It was hinted that she had sung rag-time to the Sphinx and chanted Tagore to the Hindus. In the second place, she had auburn hair—and had once been married. In the third place, she had comprehended enough to guess the reason Phil never ventured out of San Francisco. Unmodestly, she admitted to herself, the reason was Edith. In the fourth place —but that doesn't matter. Given an auburn-haired girl with intelligence and nothing else matters.

One evening they sat on the beach. Phil listened to the waves crashing against Seal Rocks; watched the lights of China-bound steamers dipping over the horizon. Some day, he told himself, he'd set sail on one of them—some day.

Edith disturbed the reverie. "Phil, what's the difference between that steamer and me?"

"Wall, I don't know. What is the diff'runce, Mrs. Bones?"

"If that steamer lost its first mate, a second mate'd take his place."

"That's probably the world's worst joke, Ede."

"But it's the world's best bet."

"You speak with finality, fair lady. Are you conveying to me the unhappy news that you'll never marry again?"

"Never—consciously."

"Sounds determined." After a pause, "Going to chuck me?"

"Not completely. You're one of life's necessary evils. But remember this, from now on you're to be just a good friend—a buddy."

"Not so good, not so good. Like a fellow loving a girl—as a sister."

"No, this is different, Phil. It's really very flattering if you see it my way. I like you so much that I don't want to risk having you as husband. You'd probably spoil it. Anyhow, my flirting days are over—flirting with the county recorder's office, that is. I'm free and I like it."

"Sounds pretty stony, but—we'll see."

"It is stony, Phil, and just to be sure of it, I'm going to have you swear—swear that you'll never make love to me again."

Phil hesitated helplessly.

"Either you swear, or—or I join Ruth Maddux's party to the Orient."

To Edith, Phil swore audibly; to himself, irreverently.

Then it was that Edith knew she loved Phil and wanted to marry him. Curiously, that was Phil's identical emotion.

They sat silent for some time. Phil watched a flirtatious signal light on Point Lobos. Edith ruined her new spring hat, rubbing splinters from the wave-worn beam behind her.

Finally he got to his feet, gazed across the ocean, and spoke with uncharacteristic determination. "Ede, I'm going to take up Uncle Phil's offer. I'm going to leave you and try to forget how much I love you. Sunday night for New York."

No one but Edith could have accomplished it. Too, no one but Edith could have replied, with quiet mirth, "My roaming Romeo!"

Phil was engrossed in his own musings. "I'm going to show you I can do things as well as dream them."

"If you do half as well as you dream, you'll be the first crude specimen of perpetual motion."

"Wait and see! I'm going to surprise you—and uncle. I'll take him up. It's his last offer, anyhow, I guess. He said something about my starting East by Sunday or—but I can't tell you the rest. Uncle has his own little way of expressing things."

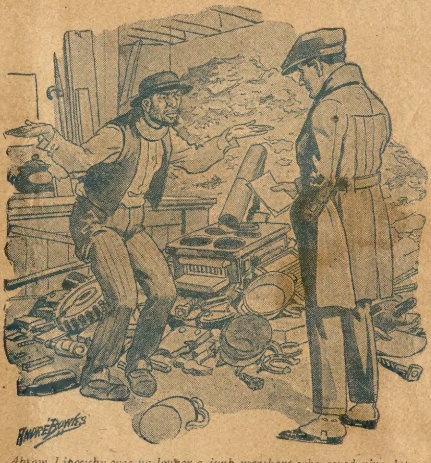
"I'm hungry," she declared, as if a courageous journey to New York was of little moment. "We're going to decorate one of the tables at the Cliff House with ourselves as fast as we can. If we don't hurry, you'll have to tell your story to the coroner. I'm so hungry I could eat the wax cherries off my bonnet."

THEY hurried along the boardwalk. Their progress was the harmonious result of Phil's abstraction and Ede's experimentation. He strode out, deep in thought, little realizing the difficulties of her five-feet-two keeping abreast of his six-feet-one. Yet she accomplished the impossible. The secret of her success was a tiny refrain which she hummed to herself as she toddled along. She murmured to herself, "Take-a-few-short-steps-then-a-skip-skip-skip."

Near the Cliff House, he slackened his pace. Catching sight of her loveliness in the light from the lobby, he declared passionately, "I'll show you. I'll prove to you I'm not a total bounder. You won't always have to be ashamed of me."

She turned away from him, paused, then hurried into the Cliff House. He mustn't see her tears. He mustn't know she didn't want him to leave her.

Thru the evening she fought to keep her secret from him. It was a cruel task. The lights, the music, the swirl of pleasure isolated her, made her feel alone and very helpless.



Abram Lipovsky was no longer a junk merchant who owed nine dollars and ninety-eight cents. . . . He was a patriot pausing on the streets of Petrograd. . . .

In the days that followed, however, she sped him in her gayest manner, last-minute errands, neglected phone calls, forgotten appointments. On Sunday, she smiled up at him and told him she was glad he was going.

They stood together on the platform till final the "All Aboard." Each tried to remember things he planned to tell the other. Each could recall only things he dared not say. The train started jerkily. He swung aboard the rear step, waved good-by to her. He saw her turn slowly back into the station. Discreetly, the train rounded a curve that he might not hear her sobs or glimpse her trembling shoulders.

Four days followed, more incredible to Phil in their changing panorama than his most fantastic dream. He was moving, going somewhere, adventuring. He never thought he'd do it.

The phantasy grew more entrancing as they neared their destination. Grand Central Station must surely be a den of gnomes; New York, a wilderness of giants.

Finally, he stepped from his car to the sloping runway. Instantly a perspiring passenger elbowed him unapologetically. A red-cap tore suit cases from his hands. People surged about him like cattle. In the thump and confusion, his dream vanished. In its place grew a crimson resentment toward these heaving beasts. With a fierce pleasure he jostled a bit more vigorously. People jostled back. The confusion increased. Magically his anger vanished in the zest of the sport. By a strange alchemy of the mob, he became for an instant a true New Yorker.

As the herd singled thru the exitway, he glanced half-curiously beyond their heads to convince himself there was no dipping tank thru which each must disinfect his wool. Vaguely he began to wonder about Uncle Philip.

He knew the old cynic would never go to the trouble of meeting him. Uncle's scorn for women was matched only by his indifference for men. He'd probably decided to leave his scatter-brained nephew loose ends to make his way out as best he could.

Phil's doubts were promptly quieted. He heard his name called in clarion voice. He searched futilely for some moments for a figure to match the voice. Finally, almost submerged beneath the press of normal sized individuals, he came upon the merest sliver of humanity, Aloysius O'Carnahan, ex-newsboy, now chief "runner" for the firm of Standish, Watson & Phillips.

He handed Phil a note, simultaneously booming, "Your uncle says to come wit' me."

"Dear Nephew," the note read. "If you've come to New York to work, you might as well start right in. If you haven't, you might as well start right home. Give your trunk checks to an expressman and come right down to the office. "P. C. STANDISH."

"Doesn't seem in a hurry, does he?" Phil smiled.

"Aw, dat's old 'Wolf' Standish every minute," the lad declared vehemently.

"'Wolf' Standish! Nice name!" Phil commented.

He left the station in trepidation. Piloted by Aloysius, he soon found himself facing his uncle.

"My namesake!" his uncle mused distastefully. "Anything from the neck up? Plenty from the neck down. You may be able to stand the gaff. Ready to go to work?"

Phil was busy studying his uncle. He wondered what induced that appearance of constantly smelling something unpleasant. He speculated as to whether it was the close cropping of the mustache which drew the upper lip together. His uncle's question startled him.

"I—I'm not quite sure what I'm best fitted to do."

"Best fitted to do! Bosh! That's the last thing you'll have to worry about. I'll decide that for you. I'll decide everything for you. All you've got to do is work. You'll start collecting bad debts. You're big. Creditors aren't so likely to pitch you down the stairs."

To his secretary, "Take him to Martin. Martin'll know what to do." Chuckling in a disquieting manner at Phil, "Yes, Martin'll know what to do! Hope you have luck, but—I don't think—you will."

"Sweet uncle!" thought Phil. "I know I'm going to like this job!"

HIS interview with Martin was quite as brief as that with his uncle. Martin had been instructed the day before. He knew what was expected of him. "Give him all the accounts you've got. Load him up. It'll do him good. Make him see what a tramp he is. Only way to handle these wise college fellows."

Phil started on his way doubly girded: with a bundle of bills originating in 1915, and his uncle's parting inspiration.

His list of clients read like a Russian telephone directory "owskis," "isks" and "vitches."

"Talk about going to Europe," he mused. "That's staying home compared to this. Why, I'll cover half of Russia and all the Holy Land the first day."

At the moment, the importance of the idea did not strike him. Yet it registered itself somewhere far back in his subconsciousness. Then, suddenly, one day when smells got too thick and grime got too crawling, it popped itself into his thought.

A good idea! Really a happy hunch! Going to Europe! Surely. That was what he always wanted to do. Now he could do it and get paid for going.

It was all in a person's point of view, anyhow. Over in Europe, shops were made of stone and wood just as in New York. These were the sorts of people he'd meet over there. Europe—New York! New York—Europe! Same thing, if he'd only believe it was.

Of course, the idea did not immediately make him the champion bill collector of New York. He still received his quota of garlic-scented "neins" and greasy fists. Evening still brought him the realization that he was dead tired and that he hadn't taken in a cent.

But the notion did simplify matters. It transformed not only his surroundings but the people with whom he was bickering. Abram Lipovsky was no longer a junk merchant who owed nine dollars and ninety-eight cents. He was a patriot pausing on the street in Petrograd to watch the collapse of a royal heirarchy. Felix Eisenstein vanished from his sawdust bedecked delicatessen. He bore priceless delicacies to princesses in Jerusalem. Even Dhal Kubal, seller of hides, was garbed in vestments of a keeper of the harem.

Each morning, when he took the subway at Fifty-Ninth street, he set sail for Europe. Day by day, he visited strange places his fancy visioned in east side tenement houses, tawdry shops made magnificent thru his fantasy. Gradually, however, he discovered that his steps tended more and more toward the waterfront where the craft of civilization swayed at their hawsers. Each evening, dropping his five-cent ticket in the box at Fulton street, he embarked for California. For, Edith meant California to him and one of her letters invariably awaited him at uncle's apartment.

He wondered whether any one had ever in all history received such fascinating letters, chatty, inspiring. They lifted him out of his gloom. They recreated California for him, and thru California brought Edith very near. They told him everything—— No! Suddenly he realized she was leaving out of her letters much more significant things than she was putting in them. She was saying nothing of loneliness, of sleepless nights and gray dawns.

Yet, only in little quotations of poetry, playfully nicknamed "prelumes," which she placed at the beginning of each letter, did she give hint of her secret.

One day:

"Over the world and under the world,
And back at last to you."

When she wrote this she had probably been heartened by some chance remark in Phil's letter.

Another day:

"Speed love's ebb, as we greet its flow,
To have and to hold, and in time—let go."

Finally, one afternoon, however, came catastrophe. She neglected adding the customary "Jr." to the "Philip Standish" on the envelope. Consequently, Uncle Philip's new valet put the letter with his afternoon mail.

Arriving home that evening, Uncle Philip opened a letter which began "Dearest Old Muchly Missed." He stared with surprise. He recognized the handwriting as that on Philip's daily envelope. That was after he had read:

"For, clear as summer lightning-flare,
quaint Edith's warning ran:
Don't walk or talk with Uncle Phil—a
most atrocious man."

"A most atrocious man, eh? Hum! Hum! A most—— Well, I'll be——"

He stropped his forefinger on his chin.

"All the same! Women folks—all the same! Snares and troublemakers. Always setting man against man. A most atrocious—— Well, I'll cure that pinheaded nephew of this softening of what does duty as his brain. I'll cure him. She will call me. . . . Today's as good as another. I'll cure him. He'll never be worth a continental to the firm till I do, anyhow."

To his valet, "When Mr. Standish comes in, give him this letter. I opened it by mistake. When he's read it, ask him to step in here."

"He's coming in the front door now, sir."

From the hall, Phil's "Aw, shucks." He'd found no San Francisco postmark.

A sepulchral valet faced him. "A letter for you, sir. Your uncle——"

"Why the gloom? It's from San Francisco. That's cause for celebration not death-masks. I say, Uncle!"

The voice from his uncle's study matched the solemnity of the valet's face.

"Yes, I heard you. A letter from San Francisco! A very interesting letter indeed."

"You like her letters, too, do you?"

"I said they were interesting. I said nothing about liking them. On the contrary—but that brings us directly to what I was going to say to you. I suppose you realize, young man, that, so far, you've been a dead loss to me and to the company? Your collections haven't covered your expense account, much less your salary."

"Salary? Oh, yes. I'd forgotten."

Uncle looked displeased.

"I've given you your chance——"

"Yes. I know. That's just what I was coming in to tell you about—at least, partly. Captain Terry Mason of the good ship Christine. Remember the big bill he owed? Remember? Well, its collected."

"It's what?"

"COLLECTED." Phil paused to give the announcement its full force. Before uncle caught his breath Phil continued quite casually: "You see, he's from San Francisco. I knew him out there. Fact is, I shipped with him once—almost. But today I was sailing around down on the wharves—wasting time, as you call it—and I ran across him. Told him about the bill. He felt pretty badly about it. Said he'd been in the Honolulu trade—made a lot of money. Forgot all about the bill, tho."

Uncle's lungs again functioned. "Terry Mason paid his bill?"

"Sure. And, besides, he said something to that deep-sea gang down there. Said if they didn't come thru and do the right thing by me he'd knock h—l 'n' eighty cents out of 'em. After that, he said some very complimentary things about me. Want to hear 'em?"

Uncle wriggled uncomfortably. "Humm-mp!" was all he said. He pondered. Finally he declared with the precision of a small-town judge, "Well, I always said you'd come thru, didn't I?"

"Managed to keep it secret from me, pretty well. But Terry Mason told me something. Said that bunch of bills was the finest lot of deadheads this side of Port Said."

Uncle smiled guiltily. "But that's beside the point. What I wanted to talk about was this—this young lady from San Francisco."

Phil beamed. "Ede?"

"I'm not quite sure what her name is, but—she writes poetry."

"Poetry?" Phil's face fell. Then, "'Clear as summer lightning—flare'?" he quoted.

Uncle glowered.

Phil grinned. "Clever, wasn't it?"

"Clever, eh? Insulting your uncle, who's given you your one chance to buck up and be a man. Clever, eh?"

"Not so bad."

"Not so bad, eh? Pretty clever in every way, is she?"

"Well, she likes me."

"Talk sense. You're a fool, and I'm willing to bet she's a bigger one."

An inspiration struck Phil. "Willing to bet, are you?"

Uncle appeared to hesitate. "Why, yes, I'm willing to bet."

"I'll take you."

"What's that? Take me?"

"Sure."

"Bet me? With whose money?"

"Yours. The money I'm going to earn as head of your collection department."

Uncle's eyes brightened, yet he was a too shrewd bargainer to let his nephew know that was exactly the trap he had laid for him. Get the boy interested in the firm, he reasoned, and he might forget the poetry-sick creature in the West.

"You'll bet on her cleverness, eh? Well, I've a scheme to test it."

The idea had occurred to uncle as his eyes circled the room, trying to formulate his scheme of attack. Get the boy interested in the firm! Have him mortgage his collection manager's salary-to-be. Make him lose the bet. Show up the cleverness of his girl and cinch the boy to the job at the same time.

"Bring me that score of 'The Chocolate Soldier' from the piano."

Phil looked puzzled.

"What was the most popular piece in the opera?"

"'My Hero,' of course."

"Hum-mp! Might know you'd be an expert on fool musical comedies. Know when it was first produced?"

"Some time before I won the war, I think."

Uncle shrugged impatiently. "Nineteen-nine, to be exact. September sixth, nineteen-nine. So, to carry out my scheme, you're to send this telegram to this—to this—whatever she is: 'O. Straus September six nineteen-nine first six last line.' Ten words; flat rate; no extra charge; evidence of a good business training."

Phil's brows wrinkled. "Hmm! Very interesting." He grinned at his uncle. "Just add 'mother and child doing nicely' and she'll wire back congratulations."

"Don't get it, eh? Wel, you'd better pray she has a bigger sample of brains than you or you'll lose your bet."

"Oh, this is a guessing game, is it? She's to guess what this is all about?"

"My boy, you're marvelous!"

"Well, if I got a message like that I'd wire back the latest quotations on straightjackets."

"I'll explain. You'd never get it otherwise. The 'O. Straus six nineteen-nine' means 'The Chocolate Soldier'; 'first six last line' refers, of course, to the hit of the show."

"Clear as a London fog!" Phil started humming "My Hero." "'Come, come, I want you only——'"

PHIL paused in amazement, smiled admiringly at his uncle, and offered his hand. "Not so bad! Not so bad!" His grin signaled a new-found sense of comradeship. "You know, it takes a bachelor to know how to handle women, doesn't it?"

"Well, she'll probably never guess what it's all about."

"But if she does?"

"Then she's more brains than either of us, and'll probably be on her way East before I can tell her it's O. K."

"And if she doesn't?"

"Then you'll drop her, or I'll drop you. You're going to end this thing one way or the other. Either you marry and settle down and accomplish something; or you give her up and forget her. I'm for having you get rid of her. If you do; you'll have a fighting chance of amounting to something before I give up hopes."

"And if I don't give her up?"

"Then I'm thru with you. But if you're going to marry—and I suppose you will. You're one of this dreamy, mushy sort. If you're going to marry, I don't want you to make a mistake. 'Till death do us part' is a long sentence, especially with an uncongenial cellmate."

So Uncle's plan was accepted. If he lost, Phil concluded he'd accept Terry Mason's offer to work his way back to the coast. His family would probably be scandalized, but Edith'd like his spirit. He wasn't counting seriously on losing, however. He had confidence in Ede's cleverness.

"I'll give her just two days," uncle muttered on the way to the telegraph office. "See how bright she is. She will quote rehashed Kipling to me! A most atrocious—of all the nerve! Well, here's where I even up things."

"The messenger boy'll probably wake us pretty early tomorrow morning," Phil mused.

"Messenger boy?"

"Yes, with Ede's answer to your little puzzle."

"Well, don't let it keep you awake. She'll probably wire: 'Please explain that dear telegram. You're too clever for words,' or something equally brilliant."

"I'll trust her master mind."

"Mind, nothing! God never gave women intelligence. He just chucked in a bunch of conceit instead."

"Anatole France said something on that order once. Remember, Uncle? But even he fell for 'em—at 70, too."

The last thing that night, Phil shouted as good night sentiment, "Sleep well, Uncle; and vive le Anatole France."

Insistent ringing of the doorbell awakened them next morning.

"There's that 'please-explain' telegram I predicted," uncle called from his room.

Phil hurried to the door, signed the yellow receipt blank, and tore open the telegram. He paused in uncle's doorway, shaking with laughter.

"Here's where you don't go to the office today, old wise man," he announced.

"Cut out those foolish capers, and let's see the telegram," uncle directed rather grumpily.

Phil handed it over. Rubbing his chin, uncle read: "Emerson Grand Army fifty-five too easy try something different."

"Snappy little whiffet, isn't she?" he growled.

"Rather clever, don't you think? All in ten words, too. Flat rate, no extra charge, evidence of good business sense. Oh, she's clever all right. But it takes us clever fellows to pick the clever girls."

"If you were half as wise as she probably makes you think you are, you'd figure out some way of finding out what she said in this condemned telegram."

"There are a number of books in the city library," Phil suggested. "Might drop in there and look a few thru. Card index, too. That might help some."

"First glimmering of intelligence you've shown since you've been in New York."

An hour later, the jubilant Phil, with an equally defected uncle, thumbed files in the city library. After a weary search, Phil finally whispered to uncle from his card-index drawer, "Here it is: 'Emerson, L. O., Grand Army Songs, Music Room, Fifth Floor.'"

"And no elevator," uncle groaned.

"Great stunt," Phil grinned. "Four

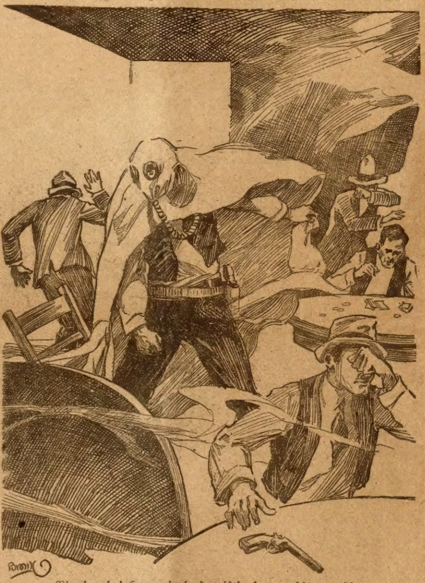
(Continued on Page 15.)

Ghost of the Borderland

By James Perley Hughes

LOS SANTOS, just over the Mexican line from the southernmost portion of California, was celebrating the fiesta of a patron saint. An American would have thought it the Fourth of July, except where the calendar disproved the outward signs. The two main business blocks were ablaze with lights, while from the saloons came the voices of men — and women. Dance halls were crowded with swirling couples, while the members of jazz bands toiled until the perspiration rolled down their faces.

But it was the gambling tables that attracted the milling crowds in the greatest numbers. The roulette wheel whirled in subdued rhythm and the little marble clicked as it dropped in the compartment which would cause some men to smile joyously and others to stifle a curse as the croupier raked in the multi-colored chips and urged the crowds to try their luck again. To the right of the roulette table was the faro bank, presided over by a saturnine individual with the inevitable green eye-shade of the professional gambler. Slowly, but with a certain deftness of motion, he dealt the cards from a small nickel-plated box to alternate piles, while opposite him sat a man before a board not unlike the abacus of the Chinese upon which small beads represented the various cards. Thus was the "case kept" that the players might know what cards had not yet appeared. Between the men was a diagram of the various cards of the deck upon which bets were placed.



The hooded figure dashed swiftly from table to table.

"King wins and the nine loses," droned the dealer, raking in the chips of those who had lost and paying those bets that were upon the winning side of the turn of the cards.

At other tables were poker, twenty-one, dice and other games. Each attracted its crowd of votaries, while the bar at the further end of the room was doing a rushing business.

Terry O'Donnell had been spending a vacation with his A. E. F. buddy, Dick Harmsworth, in San Diego and had accompanied him on a motor trip thru lower California, during which Harmsworth had collected a large sum of money for his firm which had extensive dealings on the Mexican side of the international boundary. O'Donnell, a native of New York's famous Bowery, had been drawn to the young Californian during their services overseas as members of the same gas battalion and since their discharge the two had not only kept up an active correspondence, but had visited each other when on their summer vacations.

Each had been a strengthening influence to the other during their military experience overseas. The army had taken Terry O'Donnell, a product of the lower New York school, and made a man of him. Time was when he trod a path that might have led up the river to an institution more famous than popular, but with his discharge from the army, he could look any policeman in the eye and tell him to mind his own business.

The draft had caught up Dick Harmsworth when whisky was getting the better of him and had it not been for Terry O'Donnell his service in the A. E. F. would have been one debauch after another with intervals in the guardhouse, but the young New Yorker was always near to aid his buddy and see that he did not overstep the bounds.

O'Donnell had been reared amid the devious ways of professional gamblers. He had been in the great sealed houses in upper New York where the rich play nightly for high stakes. Likewise he had been in the ill-smelling dives of the lower city, where the poor play for pittances.

The two reached Los Santos at the height of the fiesta and it was Dick Harmsworth who soon was hoarsely commanding the overworked bartenders to serve him "just another little drink." Terry was worried. It was the first time that his buddy of overseas had relapsed into his old habits and when he lost him in the crowds that thronged the two short blocks making up the business district of the little town, frantic search was begun.

Desperately he went from saloon to dance hall and from dance hall to saloon. No sign of Dick Harmsworth and the whispered stories that he had heard of the unsavory reputation of some of Los Santos' leading citizens began to echo thru his mind.

The hunt led him to a gambling establishment over one of the larger cafes in the middle of the block where the crowds were the thickest. More than two hours had elapsed since he had seen Dick and the visit to the gaming rooms was a last desperate chance, as Harmsworth had showed little inclination toward gambling during their association

(Continued on Page 13.)

THE CASE AND THE GIRL

BY RANDALL PARRISH

CHAPTER XXI.

THE YACHT SEMINOLE.

THERE was little to do but wait impatiently for some further message of guidance. McAdams dispatched a few telegrams to nearby lake ports, and briefly outlined certain plans of action for the morrow, provided nothing further was heard from the missing boat; these included a possible visit to Fairlawn, and a city-wide search for Hobart, who both men decided could not be included among the party on the yacht. West told his new assistant the entire story in detail, and Mac's interest in ferreting out the matter became intense. It was the kind of case which fascinated him with its mystery, but no theory he could spin born from long experience, seemed to exactly fit all the revealed facts. The great puzzle revolved about the strange actions of the girl; her part in the affair presenting an unsolvable riddle. They must have talked for an hour, discussing the situation frankly from every angle, yet arriving at no definite conclusion. The sky in the east was red with dawn when both men fell asleep in their chairs, still waiting.

It was 9 o'clock, and still no word. The two had eaten a hasty breakfast in a restaurant across the street, discussing the situation again thoroly, but to no more satisfactory result. It seemed impossible to reconcile certain facts. If the silver knife, with its call for help, had indeed been dropped by Natalie Coolidge, and she was being held a prisoner in the hands of villains on board the Seminole, why had she acted toward West as she did in that house on Wray street? To all appearances there she had been hand in glove with the conspirators, willing even to connive at the Captain's murder if necessary to the success of their crime. Only one theory was possible; that the girl was under constraint, driven to her strange act by personal fear. She dare do nothing else, terrorized by the threats of Hobart, and her own sense of utter helplessness in his power. This, and this only, must be the answer to the riddle.

McAdams, unable to remain quiet, departed to get his police search started in an attempt to discover Hobart in his new hiding place. The fellow could not be on the yacht, as that had sailed from Jackson Port at far too early an hour for him to have possibly made one of the party. He would still be in the city then, securely concealed in some dive of the underworld, perfecting his plans, whatever they might be, and, perhaps, arranging to join those on the boat later. The detective even thought this unlikely, his theory being that Hobart merely desired to get the girl safely out of the way for a length of time sufficient to enable him to complete his nefarious scheme. He argued that Natalie was in no real danger; she would be held no doubt, kept out of sight as long as was necessary, but otherwise left uninjured. This was no strong-arm crime, but a high class confidence game, and the important thing was to quickly lay hands on Hobart. With him once in the toils, the whole conspiracy would instantly collapse. With this end in view, McAdams took up the man's trail, leaving West to stand guard over the telephone.

The latter called up Sexton, and hurried him out to Fairlawn, with instructioing to find out all he could from the servants there relative to any late developments. He expected no important revelation from this point, as Natali could not have returned home, yet there might have been a telephone communication, or some other occurrence of interest to furnish a clew. Sexton was instructed to report the result of his investigation at the earliest moment possible. This accomplished, nothing remained for West to do, but sit down and wait for something else to happen.

The delay was shorter than he anticipated. There was a sharp ringing of the bell, the police operator responding quickly.

"Police Headquarters. What's wanted? McAdams; no, he is not in just now. Who is calling him? Harbor Master's office; all right; hold the wire a minute."

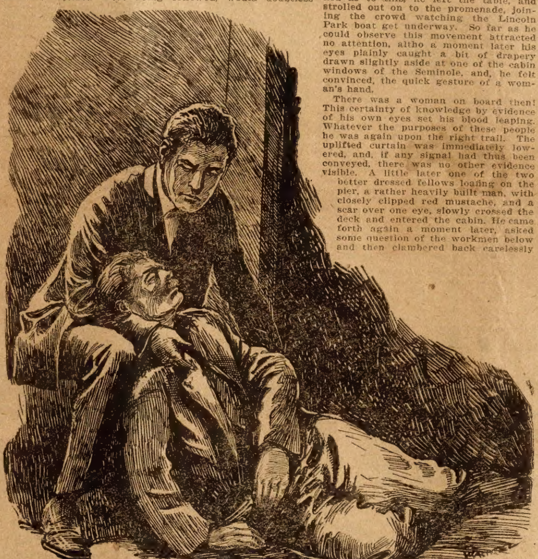
He turned his head around.

"Must be your case, Captain; better hear what they have to say."

West grasped the receiver eagerly.

"Is this the Seminole matter?" he asked swiftly. "Certainly, I understand about it. What's that. Oh. Winchell told you to call up if you learned anything. Of course; what is it? Yes, I hear; just found her tied up at north side of Municipal Pier. What's the trouble? Engine working bad, and had to come in, hey? All right—thanks; I'll go straight over and see them."

This was great luck, yet there was very little he could hope to accomplish alone, without the help and authority of McAdams. Even if the vessel had been stolen—which was probably not true—he possessed no power of arrest. All he could hope to do would be to keep the fellows in sight until Mac showed up, and, if possible, prevent them from putting out into the lake again. Even in that he needs must be cautious not to be seen by any of the gang who might recognize him. An alarm, proving they were being followed, would doubtless send them scattering instantly. If they were to be trapped, no suspicion could be aroused.


"You are hurt—badly?"

West thought of all these things as a taxi bore him across the city to the pier, and acted accordingly. The open-air restaurant accorded him every reasonable opportunity for concealment, while affording ample view of whatever was going on. It was a bright, sunshiny day, the waters of the lake a deep blue. No crowd was present, yet enough people were at the tables, or lounging about the pier, to make his presence unnoticeable. The pleasure boat for Lincoln Park, a band aboard, and with a barker industriously busy, was close by, surrounded by a bevy of women and children. Beyond these, on the same side, snuggled close against the cement wall, lay the yacht. West ordered a drink and sat down at a table within easy view, altho partially concealed himself by a pillar supporting the roof.

The Seminole was a much larger boat than he had anticipated seeing, yet he could not doubt her being the vessel sought. The name was plainly stenciled on the bow, as well as upon the dingy towing astern. Her deck lay almost even with the promenade, and he was able to trace her lines clearly from where he sat. The craft had evidently been constructed for comfort as well as speed. He noted two short masts unrigged, a bridge forward of the wheelhouse, together with a decidedly commodious cabin aft. The deck space between was clear, except for the hatchway leading down to the engine. The planking was clean, as tho newly scrubbed, while every handrail glistened in the sun. The cabin appeared tightly closed, even the windows being heavily draped. Some mechanics were evidently below; there was a sound of hammering, and occasionally a fellow in overalls appeared at the hatch opening. No one wearing any semblance of a yacht uniform was visible, altho four or five men lounged about the deck, or close at hand on the pier, apparently connected with the vessel. Two were well-dressed, rather gentlemanly appearing fellows, the others of a decidedly rougher class, altho bearing no outward marks of being seamen. While an air of carelessness was assumed by all these, yet West, watching them closely, felt that they were very much on their guard, anxiously waiting an opportunity to depart. No face among the party had any familiarity; he had encountered none of them at Mike's Place the evening before. Satisfied as to this, he left the table, and strolled out on to the promenade, joining the crowd watching the Lincoln Park boat get underway. So far as he could observe this movement attracted no attention, altho a moment later his eyes plainly caught a bit of drapery drawn slightly aside at one of the cabin windows of the Seminole, and, he felt convinced, the quick gesture of a woman's hand.

There was a woman on board then! This certainty of knowledge by evidence of his own eyes set his blood leaping. Whatever the purposes of these people he was again upon the right trail. The uplifted curtain was immediately lowered, and, if any signal had thus been conveyed, there was no other evidence visible. A little later one of the two better dressed fellows loafing on the pier, a rather heavily built man, with closely clipped red mustache, and a scar over one eye, slowly crossed the deck and entered the cabin. He came forth again a moment later, asked some question of the workmen below and then clambered back carelessly over the rail, joining his companion on the pier.

"A half hour yet; it was quite a job the boys had, but they are making time. Come over here a minute."

They walked forward, out of earshot from where West sat on a bench in the sun. He watched the fellows closely, yet without neglecting the boat, but they neither glanced toward him, or seemed aware of his existence. Convinced that they felt no suspicion, but were merely exercising ordinary precaution not to be overheard, the watcher soon banished all fear of them from his mind. His whole thought centered on the early arrival of McAdams. Until the detective came there was nothing he could do but sit there quietly and wait. But what if the necessary repairs were completed, and the Seminole sailed before Mac got there? The fellow called Joe had mentioned half an hour, and he probably meant that was the time set by the mechanics for completing their job on the engine. Beyond doubt, the intention was to depart immediately. Was there any means in his power by which this could be prevented? The only suggestion which came to him was the picking of a quarrel in some way with the two men ashore.

The boat would never depart unless they were aboard, as they were evidently the leaders of the gang, yet this would be a most desperate expedient, to be resorted to only when all other effort had failed. The two were husky chaps, and he would probably be the one to suffer most in such an encounter. Besides, it would put them on their guard, and possibly avail nothing. Why not speak to the fellows pleasantly, and naturally? They had no reason to be suspicious of him; he was but one of many others lounging idly about the pier. His curiosity would seem reasonable enough, and he might thus gain some clew as to their destination. Then, even if they did sail before Mac appeared, they could be safely intercepted in time for a rescue. Indeed, such information, if it could be gained, would give opportunity to plan effective action.

Circumstances seemed to work to this end, the two men strolling carelessly back toward where he sat, pausing within a few feet of him, all their attention apparently riveted upon the yacht.

"Had some hard luck?" he ventured. "Engine give out?"

The red-mustached one glanced about, his eyes surveying the speaker indifferently.

"Broke a piston, and had to be towed in," he replied carelessly. "We'll be off again presently."

"Nice day for a sail."

"Sure is."

The very indifference of the fellow led West to take a chance.

"Some nice boat you've got there. The Coolidge yacht, isn't it? Haven't seen it out lately."

"Are you a yachtsman?"

"A bit of an amateur, yes; have a catboat I play with some. Belong to the Columbia Club."

"Off Grant Park; this boat quarters in the Jackson lagoon. We left there last night. You knew Coolidge?"

"No, never met him; recognized the boat, tho. Has it been sold?"

"Not yet. It wasn't his anyway; belonged to the estate. I'm one of the trustees; that's how I've got the use of it—see? Ever looked it over?"

West shook his head.

"No, but I wouldn't mind; she's a dandy."

"She sure is; better inside than out to my notion. Come aboad; we've got time enough. Not thinking of buying a yacht, are you?"

"Well, I might, if the price is not too steep. I've got the fever all right; what I lack, maybe, is money. It costs a lot to run a yacht."

"Oh, I don't know. We operate this with three men as a crew. That's not so bad. Come along with us, Mark; we'll take a look at the cabin first, and then go forward."

The three men stepped over the low rail, and moved aft across the deck, the leader talking fluently, and pointing out various things of interest. His only object apparently was to arouse in West a desire to purchase. The other man never spoke, and the latter gave no thought to his presence. He had been rarely fortunate so far, and was looking for an opportunity to question his guide on the purpose of their voyage. He would wait until later; until the examination had been completed, perhaps, when they believed him a possible purchaser. Joe opened the cabin door, and West stepped inside, the interior darkened by drawn curtains. The dusk was confusing, and he stood still after the first step, hearing the latch click behind him.

CHAPTER XXII.

KIDNAPED.

A HAND gripped his shoulder as tho in a vise, and swung him around; the muzzle of an automatic confronted him, and behind it the threatening eyes of Joe glared directly into his own.

"Not a move, you d—d spy," a voice said coldly. "Now, Mark, frisk the cuss, and be lively about it. Had a gun, hey? I thought so. Give it to me. Now get the cord over there and give him a turn or two. A very good job, old boy; the fellow is safe enough, I should say."

He turned his eyes away, searching the cabin, confident that West was sufficiently secured.

"Come on out, Mary," he said sharply. "Who is this guy, anyhow?"

A woman came forward thru the shadows. West had a glimpse of her face, but the features were unfamiliar. A woman of 40, perhaps, still attractive in appearance, with dark hair and bold black eyes that met his own defiantly. He was puzzled, doubtful as to what it all meant.

So this was the woman he had seen on board; not Natalie Coolidge at all. There had been a mistake of some kind; but if so, why had these people given him this sort of reception aboard? These thoughts swept his mind in a flash, as the woman peered forward to see his features more clearly. For a moment she said nothing, and Joe broke out impatiently.

"He's the lad, ain't he?" he asked. "We ain't gone an' picked up the wrong guy?"

"No; he's the bird all right. I never

lamped him but once before myself. I heard his name then, but forgot it. He's her friend, there ain't no doubt o'that, Joe, and it ain't likely he's hanging around here just for fun, is it? My idea was it would be safer to take him in."

"Sure; what's yer name, young fellow?"

Concealment was useless; they evidently had him correctly spotted; to lie would do no good.

"Matthew West."

"That's the name," the woman exclaimed eagerly. "He is a soldier—a captain, or something like that. Jim told me about him; he's the same fellow who was snooping about Mike's place last night, before we pulled out."

"Is that so? How the h—l did you get out of there?"

"We had a little trouble," West admitted, "but they let me go."

"Yes, they did I know better than that; Hobart don't do business that way. I reckon we've played his game all right taking you in. Well, you don't get out of here so easy, let me tell you. How'd you come to get onto us?"

"That's my business."

"Oh, is it? Well, we'll make it ours from now on. There is one thing pretty sure—you were here playing a lone hand. So it don't make much difference what yer idea was. We'll take the bird along with us, Mary; then he'll be out of temptation."

The woman nodded.

"Jim will know what to do with him," she said. "All we got to do is keep him safe."

"I'll attend to that; come on, Mark, let's throw the d—n sneak into that left-hand stateroom. He'll stay there all right. Aw, take hold; don't be afraid of hurting the fellow."

They roughed him forward, but West made no attempt to resist; his hands were bound, and he was helpless. The woman threw open the narrow door, and he was bundled unceremoniously across the threshold, and thrown heavily to the floor. He struggled partially upright, protesting against being left in that helpless condition, but the red-mustached man only laughed, shutting the door tightly, and locking it. The single port hole was covered by heavy drapery, the stateroom in total darkness. Thru the door panels he could hear a voice speaking.

"He's better off that way until we get out of here. You stay here, Mary, till I can attend to him myself. Those fellows ought to have that engine fixed by this time. Mark and I better go up on deck awhile."

"But, Joe, do you think they have caught on to us?" she asked anxiously.

"No, I don't; this guy wouldn't be snooping about alone if they had. He ain't no fly cop, and just happened to be loafin' here—that's my guess. He knew this was the Coolidge yacht, and that set him to asking questions. That guy don't look to me like he was the kind to be afraid of. All we got to do is hold him here until Jim decides what he's up to. I don't want to hurt him none, unless I have to. Everything else all right, I suppose?"

"Sure; quiet as a mouse; asleep, I guess."

"That's good; well, you stay here until I come back. Want a gun?"

She did not answer so as to be heard, but West could distinguish the movement of feet in the outer cabin, and then the closing of a door. Undoubtedly the two men had gone on deck, leaving the woman there alone. His feet were not tied, and he could sit up, altho the hands were tightly bound behind him. With eyes accustoming themselves to the gloom, he could discern something of his surroundings. He was in the ordinary stateroom of a small yacht, with barely space in which to move about comfortably. Two bunks were at one side, with a metal stand at their foot for washing purposes. A rug covered the floor, the beds were made, and a stool, screwed to the deck, occupied a position just below the porthole. A few hooks were in evidence on the opposite wall; but no garments dangled from them to tell of previous occupancy. Indeed, the place was scrupulously clean, as tho unused for some time.

West made his way to the port, pushed aside the curtain with his shoulders and looked out. The smallness of the opening made any hope of escape in that way impossible; nor could he expect to attract the attention of any one ashore.

His view was limited to the east and north, a wide expanse of blue water, the only thing in sight being the pleasure boat bound for Lincoln Park, already little more than a black dot in the distance. Convinced of his complete helplessness, he sat down on the stool to consider the situation.

He had been a fool; there was no doubt as to that; the only thing now was how he could best retrieve his folly. He had walked blindly into a trap, suspecting nothing, confidently relying on his own smartness, believing himself unknown. Now he must find his way out. It angered him to realize how easily it had been accomplished; not so much as a blow struck; no opportunity even for him to cry out an alarm—only that dark cabin, and the threatening revolver shoved against his cheek. He wondered where McAdams was; perhaps hunting him even then on the pier; and Sexton, what had he succeeded in discovering out at Fairlawn? That Natalie Coolidge had returned home, no doubt. At least he no longer believed she was with this yachting party—evidently there was but one woman on board. Yet, whether she was there or not, it was clear enough from what he had heard that this sudden voyage for the Seminole had some direct connection with the mystery he was endeavoring to solve. That was why he had been decoyed aboard, and made prisoner—to keep him silent; to get him securely out of the way. Yet this knowledge revealed nothing as to what their real purpose was.

What did they intend doing with him now that he was in their hands? Joe had declared his fate would be left with Hobart. Then it must be that they had a rendezvous arranged somewhere with that arch-conspirator, some hidden spot along the lake shore where they were to meet shortly, and divide the spoils, or make further plans. Hobart unquestionably was the lead of the gang; but who was the woman? She had evidently been in Mike's Place the night before, and had a glimpse of his face. She must have left with that party in the automobile, yet she surely was not the one who had dropped that note begging the police to search this vessel.

What then had become of the other? If she was being held a prisoner, it was not at all probable she had been left somewhere ashore; apparently she had reason to know where she was being taken—to the Seminole; otherwise she would never have written as she did. She must have overheard their plans, before she hastily scratched off the note desperately; and yet those plans might have been changed. However, if so, why were these people—accomplices of Hobart no doubt—fleeing in the yacht, seeking to conceal their identity in an effort to disappear? What were they fleeing from? Why were they so fearful of discovery by the police? What would cause them to kidnap him, merely on suspicion that he was a friend of Natalie Coolidge? The very act was proof positive of the desperation of their crime. It could be accounted for on no other theory.

West paced the narrow space, his brain whirling, as he attempted to reason the affair out, his own helplessness becoming more and more apparent. What could he do? There was but one answer—absolutely nothing as he was then situated. He could only wait for some movement on the part of the others; his fate was out of his own hands; he had been a fool, and must pay the price. The cords about his wrists chafted and hurt with each movement. The metal washstand gave him an inspiration; its upper strip was thin, and somewhat jagged along the edge; possibly it might be utilized to sever the strands. It was better to try the experiment than remain thus helplessly bound. With hands free he could at least defend himself.

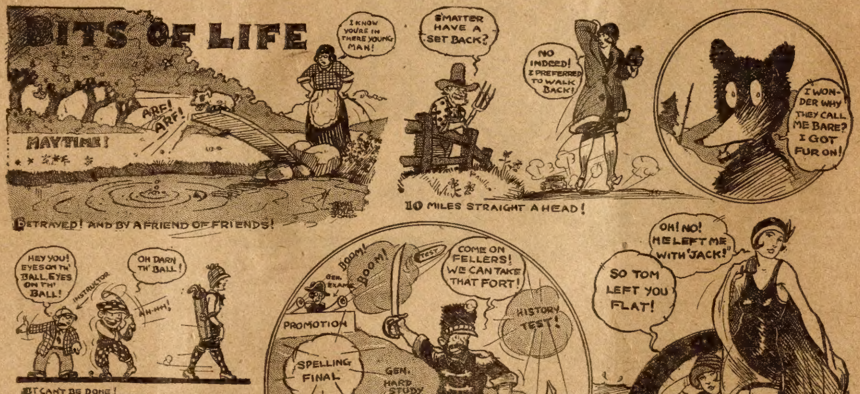
He made the effort, doubtfully at first, but hope came as the sharp edge began to tear at the rope. It was slow work, awkward, requiring all the strength of his arms, yet he felt sure of progress. He could feel the strands yield little by little, and redoubled his efforts. It hurt, the rope lacerating his wrists, and occasionally the jagged steel cut into the flesh cruelly, but the thought of freedom outweighed the pain, and he persevered manfully. At last, exercising all his muscle, the last frayed strand snapped. His wrists were bleeding, and the hands numb, but the severed cord lay on the floor and he again had the free use of his arms. The sudden freedom brought new hope and courage. He listened at the door, testing the knob cautiously. There was no yielding, and for the moment no sound reached him from without. The woman was doubtless there on guard, and any effort he might make to break down the door would only bring the whole gang upon him. Unarmed, he could not hope to fight them all. As he stood there, hesitating, unable to determine what to attempt, he became aware of a throbbing under foot, increasing in intensity. West knew instantly what it meant—they were testing out the engine; if all worked well, the boat would cast off.

He sprang back to the port and stared out, eagerly hoping that, as they swept out into the lake, he might find some opportunity to communicate with some one on the pier. Perhaps by this time Mac would have arrived, and be watching their departure, unable to intervene, as he had no warrant for arrest, or any definite knowledge that the yacht was being used for a criminal purpose. He had not long to wait. Hurrying steps echoed along the deck; a voice shouted out some order, and the end of a loosened rope dropped splashing into the water astern; the boat trembled to the pulsations of the engine, and West realized that it was at first slowly, then more swiftly, slipping away into the broad water. Already he could perceive the white wake astern, and, an instant later, as the turn to the right widened, he had a glimpse of the pier, already separated from him by a broad expanse of trembling water. Above the noise his voice would scarcely reach that distance. A crowd of people stood there watching, clinging along the edge of the promenade—McAdams was not among them. It would be useless to strive to attract their attention; not one among them would comprehend; even if they did, not one of them could help. He still stood there, gazing back at the fast receding pier, gradually becoming blurred in the distance, but hopelessly. He knew now he must face his fate alone.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FATE OF A PRISONER.

THE Seminole headed straight out into the lake, its course evidently a little to the north of east. The steady throb of the engine exhibited no lack of power, the snowy wake behind telling of rapid progress. There was a distinct swell to the water, increasing as they advanced, but not enough to seriously retard speed, the sharp bow of the yacht cutting thru the waves like the blade of a knife, the broken water churning along the sides. West clung to his perch, peering out thru the open port, watching the fast disappearing shore line in the giant curve from the Municipal Pier northward to Lincoln Park. In spite of the brightness overhead, there must have been fog in the air, for that distant view quickly became obscure and then as suddenly vanished altogether. There remained no sign of land in sight; only the seemingly limitless expanse of blue water, not so


BITS OF LIFE
MAYTIME!
ARF! ARF!
I KNOW YOU'RE IN THERE YOUNG MAN!
BETRAYED! AND BY A FRIEND OF FRIENDS!
S'MATTER HAVE A SET BACK?
NO INDEED! I PREFERRED TO WALK BACK!
10 MILES STRAIGHT AHEAD!
I WONDER WHY THEY CALL ME BARE? I GOT FUR ON!
HEY YOU! EYES ON TH' BALL, EYES ON TH' BALL!
INSTRUCTOR
OH DARN TH' BALL!
AH-HH!
IT CAN'T BE DONE!
OH! YOU GOT ONE FLAT TIRE ON THIS SIDE!
YER WRONG I GOT TWO FLAT TIRES ON THAT SIDE!
DISAPPOINTED ROMEO.
PRUDISH MISS
BANG
BOOM! BOOM!
GEN. EXAMS
TEST
COME ON FELLERS! WE CAN TAKE THAT FORT!
PROMOTION
HISTORY TEST!
SPELLING FINAL
GEN. HARD STUDY
ARITHMETIC EXAMINATION!
STORMING THE LAST FORT!
OH! NO! HE LEFT ME WITH 'JACK!'
SO TOM LEFT YOU FLAT!
THE MERRY (GRASS) WIDOW!

much as a trail of smoke breaking the encircling rim of the sky.

Except for the occasional tread of feet on the deck above, and the faint call of a voice giving orders, the yacht seemed deserted, moving unguided across the waste of waters. No sound of movement or speech reached West's ears from the cabin, and he settled down into moody forgetfulness, still staring dully out thru the open port. What was to be, would be, but there was nothing for him to do but wait for those who held him prisoner, to act. He was still seated there, listless, incapable even of further thought, when the door was suddenly unlocked. He had barely time to arise to his feet, when the man with the red mustache stepped within, facing him, as he pushed tightly shut the door behind. The fellow's eyes saw the severed rope on the floor, and he smiled, kicking the strands aside contemptuously.

"Smart enough for that, were you?" he asked. "Well, I would have taken them off myself, if I had thought about it. How did you manage? Oh, I see; rather a bright trick, old man. Feeling pretty fit, are you?"

West did not answer at once; this fellow had come with an object in mind, and his only desire was to baffle him. It was to be a contest of wits, and helpless as the prisoner was physically, he had no intention of playing into the other's hands.

"I might be, if I knew what all this meant," he said at last. "Haven't you got hold of the wrong party?"

The man laughed, standing where he blocked all passage.

"I might have been convinced that I had an hour ago," he answered coldly. "But since then I find I've made rather a good bet. I have the honor of addressing Captain West, I believe?"

"You have the name correct; there is no reason why I should deny that. Unfortunately, I do not know with whom I am conversing."

"Quite easily remedied. I am Joe Hogan, commonly called 'Red' Hogan. The moniker means nothing to you."

"I never heard it before."

"I thought not, which merely proves you are not a 'fly cop,' only a measly busy body sticking your nose into some one else's business. Well, we know how to take care of your kind, and this is likely to prove the last case you'll dabble in for a while, my man."

"What does that mean—a threat?"

"Never mind what it means; it is a straight tip. Now listen, West—Captain West I believe is the proper term of address—and you will understand better. When I got you in here I had no real knowledge as to who you were. I merely took a chance on what Mary had to say, and she twigged you at once. She's smart, that woman; never forgets a face. She sure did a good job this time. But after you were locked in safe, and nobody knew what had happened, and you certainly handled easily enough, I slipped ashore into the restaurant and called up Jim Hobart on the wire. Did he give me your pedigree? He did. Jim was about the happiest guy in the town when he learned we had you bottled. Raised h—l last night, didn't you? All right, my friend, you are going to pay the piper today. What got you into this muss, anyhow? You are no relation to the Coolidge girl, are you?"

"None whatever; merely a friend."

"Friend, hey! Well, she's a good looker; so this friendship stuff is easily accounted for. Friend, h—l!" he laughed. "You must have it bad to put on all these stunts for sweet friendship's sake. You wouldn't even quit when she told you to."

"I believed she was compelled to say what she did to me," replied West quietly. "That she was in Hobart's power, afraid of her life. There was no other explanation of her strange action possible."

"Is that so?"

"I am willing to listen to such an explanation, Hogan, and if satisfied she really wishes me to keep out of the affair, I will."

"And if not?"

"Then I am going to fight in her cause to the very end of things. You cannot frighten me; your only chance to influence my action is to make things clear. I confess I have been fighting in the dark, not even comprehending your purpose. I do know that the main stake your gang is after is the Coolidge fortune; that, in order to get hold of it, you are obliged to keep control over Miss Natalie. But I can conceive no reason why she should assist in the conspiracy. She certainly cannot be benefited by having her own fortune stolen. This is what puzzles me, but it hasn't changed my loyalty to her. I still believe in her, and feel that she is simply a victim of circumstances beyond her control. Am I frank enough?"

"Sure; it all means you intend to remain a blunder-headed fool defending a girl who does not desire any defense—a Don Quixote tilting at windmills. That is your choice, is it?"

"Unless you care to explain clearly just how Miss Natalie's interests are being protected."

"Which I am not at liberty to do at present. She is satisfied, and has practically told you so, according to Jim Hobart. If you will not accept her word, there is no use of my saying anything about the matter. Besides, West, frankly I don't give a d—n what you think. We've got you safe enough, where you can't do anything, even if you want to—so, why worry? Twenty-four hours more will finish our little job, and, until that time is up, you'll remain right here; after that we don't care where in h—l you go, or what you do—the game will have been played."

The man's tone, and air of confidence was impressive; beyond doubt he felt that the cards were all in his hands. West drew in his breath sharply.

"Apparently you are right," he said quietly. "May I ask a question or two?"

"Fire away; I'll answer as I please."

"Who is the woman on board?"

"Mary, you mean? Hobart's wife."

"She came from the place on Wray street last night in an auto?"

"Yes; I brought her along myself."

"Alone?"

"There were two of us—Mark and I—why? What are you driving at?"

"Just putting some broken threads together. Then Natalie Coolidge is not on this yacht?"

"I should say not. What would we be doing with her out here?"

"Where is she, then?"

"Oh, I begin to see what brought you aboard so easily, West. You thought we had the lady kidnaped, and was sailing off with her. Some stunt that. What put the idea in your head?"

West hesitated a moment, but decided a truthful answer would do no harm.

"I knew an automobile had driven out of the alley back of Mike's Place; and that a woman was in it. When I got away a little later I picked up a message—a note which had been dropped. It was written in a woman's hand but unsigned——"

"The little cat! She dropped it?"

"It seems so. You forgot yourself that time. So she was with you, was she?"

"I don't know what you mean. I told you who were with me. Go on; what did the note say?"

"It was only a request for the police to search the Seminole at once."

"Oh, that's the way the wind blows. But you preferred to tackle the job yourself. I am certainly obliged to you, West."

"You have no reason to be. I took that note to the police, and they are on the case. They are combing the city right now for Hobart, and if they get him, this bubble of yours is likely to be pricked."

"H—l, they won't get him. There isn't a flycop in Chicago who could locate Jim in a week, and as for Natalie, believe me, she is quite able to take care of herself."

"But where is she?"

"At home, of course, if you must know—'Fairlawn,' isn't that the name of the place? We left her there on our way to Jackson Park."

"Then the girl was with you?"

"Spilled the beans, didn't I? That comes from talking too much. However, there is no harm done. Sure she left with us, but we dropped her out at Fairlawn. It was her machine we were riding in. Say, you've questioned me about enough, so let up. Listen now—you will stay in this stateroom until we get ready to let you out. Don't try any funny business either, for if you do, you are going to get hurt. There is a guard outside in the cabin, and we are not afraid to shoot out here on the lake. Nobody knows where you are, West; so if you want to live, keep quiet—that's my advice."

He started back, one hand on the knob of the door, but West stopped him.

"Do you mind telling me where we are bound?" he questioned.

Hogan smiled, but the smile was not altogether a pleasant one.

"You will have to wait, and find that out for yourself, Captain. My orders are not to talk."

"From Hobart?"

"Sure; Jim is engineering this deal, and whatever he says goes, for he's the guy who has his hands on the dough—see?"

He slipped out, closing and locking the door behind him. West, more thoroly confused than ever over the situation in which he found himself, paced the brief length of the narrow stateroom, and then paused to stare moodily out of the port. His eyes rested on the same wide expanse of water, no longer brightened by the glow of the sun. A mass of clouds veiled the sky, while a floating bank of fog obscured the horizon, limiting the scope of his vision. Everything appeared gray and desolate, and the restless surge of waves were crested with foam. It was hard to judge just where the sun was, yet he had an impression the vessel had veered to the north, and was proceeding straight up the lake, already well out of sight from either shore.

He had learned little of the slightest value; merely that Natalie had been of the party leaving in the automobile the night before. She, undoubtedly, had been the one who had dropped the note. Then, in spite of all they had said about her, in spite of what she had told him, she was actually a prisoner, desperately begging for assistance to escape. As to the other things Hogan had told him, the probability was they were mostly lies. West did not believe the girl had returned to "Fairlawn," the story did not sound natural. If she had written that note, these fellows would never trust her alone, where she could communicate with friends. They might venture to send her in to talk with him, knowing her every word was overheard, but surely they would never be reckless enough to leave her free to act as she pleased. That was unthinkable. Besides, why should they have taken this yacht, and sailed it out secretly in the night unless she was hidden away aboard? The only conceivable object would be to thus keep her safely beyond sight and hearing. And that would be a reason why Hobart's wife should also be on board—to look after the girl. The longer he thought it all over, the more thoroly was he convinced they were both prisoners on the same vessel. Yet what could he do? There was no answer forthcoming; no possibility of breaking forth from that room was apparent; he was unarmed, helpless. If he did succeed in breaking thru the door, he would only encounter an armed guard, and pit himself against five or six men, criminals probably, who would count his death a small matter, compared to their own safety. He sank down, with head in his hands, totally unnerved—it was his fate to attempt nothing; only to wait on fortune.

Mark brought in food, merely opening the door slightly, and sliding the tray in on the floor. No words were exchanged, nor was the tray removed until just at twilight, when the fellow appeared again on a similar mission. It became dark, but no light was furnished. Outside the clouds had thickened, and a heavy swell was tossing the vessel about rather roughly. Seemingly the engine was merely endeavoring to maintain headway, with no port in immediate prospect; they were steering aimlessly into the promise of a stormy night. No sound reached him from the cabin, and finally, worn out mentally and physically, West flung himself on the lower bunk, and lay there motionless, staring up into the intense darkness.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SINKING YACHT.

LYING there motionless, yet wide awake, his senses alert, every slightest sound and movement made clearer the situation. He could feel the labored ef-

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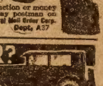

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forts of the vessel, the slap of waves against the side, the rush of water astern. Occasionally the echo of a voice reached him from the deck above, and once footsteps were audible almost over his head. The engine strokes were regular, but slow, the vibrations shaking the boat in its sturdy battling against the forces of the sea. The Seminole rolled heavily, yet there was nothing at all alarming in her actions, and West felt no premonition of illness, or fear as to the sea-worthiness of the little craft. Whoever was handling her was evidently a seaman, quite capable of conquering a storm of this magnitude. No noise came to him from the cabin, yet he had no thought it could be deserted. Hogan would certainly retain a guard there, and probably others—with no duties of seamanship weighing on them—would seek refuge from the wind-swept deck above. No doubt the fellows had a skipper, as neither Hogan, nor the man Mark, bore any resemblance to a lake sailor. Quite possibly the entire crew were innocent of what was actually transpiring aboard, and equally indifferent, so long as their wages were satisfactory. Yet it was even more probable that they had been selected for this special service because of lack of ordinary scruples; men who would never question so long as the pay was adequate for the danger involved.

It seemed to West the wind and sea were slowly decreasing in violence; there was less noise and turmoil. The movement of the vessel began to lull him into forgetfulness, his vigilance relapsed, his mind drifting in thought. He endeavored to arouse himself, to keep awake, but finally fatigue conquered, and he sank into a deep sleep. He had no knowledge of how long this slumber lasted, or what suddenly awakened him, so startled at the moment that he sat up in the berth, staring into the blackness. Was it a dream, or a reality? Had some one spoken? He could neither see nor hear anything; the boat seemed to be motionless, not even throbbing now to the beat of the engine—the silence was uncanny. It seemed to him his own heart had stopped, so still it was, and he felt a cold perspiration break out on his flesh. Something was wrong, must be wrong. Where were they—at anchor in some harbor? or helplessly adrift on the lake? The sea must have gone down; waves no longer dashed against the side, and there was no shriek of wind overhead; the yacht rocked gently, as tho the swell of the sea no longer buffeted her; there was no sound of action on the deck above. Then he heard a voice again, outside, reaching him this time plainly thru the open port.

"All set, Mapes," it said sharply. "Come on down. You finished the job?"

"Ay, ay, sir," the answer gruff, but with a tinge of excitement in the tone. "She's fixed all right. Hold hard, now, mate."

West, thoroly aroused, realizing instantly the importance of this new move, and as quickly suspecting its purpose, leaped to the port-hole, and, endeavored to gain a glimpse without. The night was still intensely black, the sky overcast and starless, the only glimmer of light the reflecting of foam tipped surges. If land was near it remained invisible, nor could he even be sure of the close proximity of a boat. There seemed to be a smudge there at the left, a black, lumping shadow, shapeless against the background of sea; yet he could not be sure. Even as he gazed at it doubtfully, the dim object disappeared, fading away like a mirage. No sound reached him to cause the vision to seem real—no voice, no creak of oars, no flap of a sail; yet something told him that mysterious shadow was a boat, a boat filled with men, creeping silently into the night, fleeing from the yacht, and vanishing into the darkness.

My God, what could such action mean? Why were these fellows deserting the Seminole, leaving him helpless aboard, locked into that stateroom? Was the yacht disabled? Sinking? And had they merely forgotten him in their own eagerness to escape? Were they in mid-lake, or close to some point of land? Had every one gone, leaving the vessel totally abandoned, a wreck buffeted by the surges, doomed to go down, unseen, its final fate unknown? Unknown! The word rising to his brain was the answer. There was the crest of the plot. What could be easier, or safer, than this ending? Who would ever know the truth? Who could ever prove anything, even if they suspected? And who was there to suspect?

No one had reason to believe he was aboard the Seminole, not even McAdams. If it was to their interest to get him permanently out of the way—if Hobart had so decided—what simpler method could be found than the sinking of the yacht? The very crew might be innocent of the purpose, dupes of the conspiracy; they might even be unaware of his presence aboard, and deceived by Hogan into the belief that the vessel had opened a seam, and must sink shortly, would take to the boat without suspecting any one was left behind. They could so testify in all honesty if any question ever arose. The very simplicity of the scheme meant safety; yet the possibility of such cold-blooded murder had never before occurred to him. Unknown without a trace left; only a boat crew landing somewhere on the coast at dawn, and scattering to the four winds. It was a plot infernal.

West stopped, his hands clinched, his heart seeming to stop its pulsing. But if Natalie Coolidge was also a prisoner on board, what of her? Wasn't that the very thing most probable? Of course it was; how foolish he had been. These men, recklessly criminal, as they were, would never sacrifice the yacht, and risk their own lives, merely to put him out of the way. He was not important enough for that; he was but an incident. It was an accident which had made him a prisoner. While this was—must be—a carefully arranged plan. The girl must be the real victim; his own plight arose merely because he chanced to be there, and the villains dare not leave him alive to tell the story.

The certainty of this acted like an electric shock. He had not felt seriously alarmed before as to his own fate. He had only been conscious of a deep anger, a mad determination to make Hogan pay. If the Seminole was sinking, and beyond doubt this was the intention of those deserters, it was going down slowly, so slowly there would be ample time for escape. He was not asleep, but wide awake, and far from paralyzed by the danger. He was not the sort to give up while there was any hope left. Surely the guard in the cabin would have departed with the others, leaving him free to act. He could smash his way out thru that door, and find something on deck to construct a raft from. This was Lake Michigan, not the ocean, and not many hours would pass before he was picked up. Vessels were constantly passing, and daylight would bring rescue.

But now the task became difficult. He must find the girl, and serve her. To his surprise his heart beat rapidly in contemplation of the task. Surely she must welcome his coming to her assistance now. She would be alone, free to reveal the truth of all this strange mix-up of affairs; perhaps the old trust, the old confidence between them would be renewed. At least in the midst of such peril, alone on the sinking yacht, facing possible death together, he would again discover the real Natalie Coolidge. The hope instantly inspired action. Every minute might mean life or death; the work must be accomplished now, if ever. The Seminole was evidently deserted, the boat containing the fleeing crew already far enough away to be beyond sound of any noise he might make. He already felt the wallowing of the dock beneath his feet, a dead, dull feeling, evidence enough that the deserted vessel was slowly, but surely going down. The condition could not last long; faster and faster the water would seep into her hold, until suddenly, without warning, perhaps, she must go down like a stone.

All these thoughts flashed across his mind almost in an instant; there was no hesitancy, no waste of time. His eager eyes searched the narrow confines of the stateroom for some possible weapon with which to assail the door. The stout stool alone seemed available. Swinging this over his shoulder, hampered by the narrowness of space, he struck again and again, with all his strength, the upper panel splintering beneath the third crashing blow. He could see nothing, but felt with his fingers along the jagged ends of the shattered wood, and redoubled his efforts, striking wildly, but with effect, until suddenly the lock gave, and the door burst open. He was in the main cabin, which was unlit and deserted. Standing there confused in the grim silence, unable for the instant to determine how to advance in the dark, he could hear the rapid beating of his own heart, and the continuous lap of waves outside. God! how sodden the deck felt under foot; what a sickening swell hurled the craft, and such stillness! If the girl was aboard why did she not cry out? Surely she must have heard that noise, the rain of blows, the crunch of wood.

He stood, crouched, listening intently for something to guide him in the right direction. And yet, even if Natalie had heard, what reason would the girl have to suspect the truth? Likely enough she was sound asleep, completely worn out, and with no knowledge of what had occurred on board. It was only the sound of that voice speaking loudly in the boat alongside which had aroused him. She had no reason to suspect desertion, no occasion to believe any other prisoner than herself was aboard.

The noise of the crashing wood, even if it awoke her, would have no special meaning to her mind, only perhaps to add to her terror. He must act alone; there was no other way. If he could only have a light of some kind, and not be compelled to grope blindly in that intense darkness.

He stepped cautiously forward, with hands outstretched, swaying to the sudden roll of the sinking hulk underneath his feet. He struck a piece of furniture, a bench bolted to the deck, and then his groping fingers came in sudden contact with the cabin wall, which he followed, circling to the left. In this manner he succeeded in finally locating the door opening out on to the deck, and had grasped the knob, when a deep moan from the black void behind caused him to become suddenly erect, his heart beating like a trip-hammer. No other sound followed, no repetition, and yet there could be no mistaking what he heard. It was a groan, a human groan, emanating from a spot but a few feet away. He took a single step in that direction; then hesitated, fearful of some trap; in the silence as he stood there poised, he could faintly distinguish the sound of some one breathing unnaturally.

"Who is there? Who moaned just now?" he asked, struggling to control his voice.

"I did," the answer was a mere husky whisper out of the darkness. "Masters, the watchman; but who are you? I don't know your voice."

"It makes no difference; are you hurt? Where are you? How can I get a light?"

"Yes, sir; I'm about done for I guess; you're over by the door, ain't you? There's a hangin' lantern just up above, if you've got a match with you. Say, that looks good; I didn't hardly know but I was dead, it was so black. But I never saw you before; how did you get aboard here?"

The flame of the match caught the wick, and flared up, throwing a dim illumination over the cabin interior. West drew down the glass, before he ventured to glance in the direction of the voice. A man lay facing him, curled up on the deck, his hair, matted with blood, hanging over eyes that were burning with fever. He made no attempt to rise, apparently was unable to move, and a dark, bloody stain covered the deck. West sprang forward, and lifted the head on his arm.

"You are hurt—badly?" he exclaimed. "What can I do for you?"

"Nuthin', I reckon," still in that same strained whisper. "I'm done for; no doubt of it. That guy got me. You ain't one o' that murderin' gang, are you?"

"No; I was a prisoner on board; I came here to help a girl."

"A girl! Miss Coolidge you mean, sir?"

"Yes, Natalie Coolidge; do you know anything about her? Where she is?"

"Sure, I know; the d—n whelps left her here; that was their dirty game, sir. 'Twas because I tried to unlock her door that Hogan slugged me. The boat's goin' down, ain't it? I know'd it was; I heard the skunks talk about what they was goin' to do, an' then I tried to get her out, sir."

"You were the watchman?"

"Yes, sir; down in the lagoon at Jackson Park. These fellows come off to the yacht about midnight, an' they had Miss Coolidge with 'em. That's what fooled me, sir, an' I let 'em get aboard, thinkin' it must be all right. After that I couldn't do nuthin'—there was six to one, an' that 'Red' Hogan had a gun in his mitt. They hustled me down into the cabin. I didn't even know she was a prisoner until they locked her into a stateroom; then I got wise, but it was too late."

"And she is there yet, Masters? What room is it?"

"The last one to the right, sir. Don't you mind about me; I'm done for, but maybe there's a chance for you two."

Captain West finds the real Natalie at last, only to lose her again in a whirl of excitement. Be sure to get next week's installment of this interesting story.

* * *

Couldn't Impose Penalty.

The tall, long-haired youth nervously entered the publisher's office, carrying under his arm a small roll of paper.

"Good afternoon, sir," said the publisher. "Take a seat and tell me what I can do for you."

The youth looked nervous.

"Well—er—I have a song here," he began, "that I have composed, and I was wondering if you would publish it. Er—shall I sing it?"

"Oh, yes, let's hear it," said the publisher.

When the song was finished the publisher sat very still and said nothing.

"Well," the young man asked, "what do I get for it?"

"Oh," replied the publisher, "I'm a publisher, not a magistrate."

* * *

Husband's Birthday.

The lady shopper had ordered about everything hauled down from the shelves.

"I don't see just the right thing," she decided at last. "I want to surprise my husband on his birthday."

"Well," suggested the exhausted clerk, "why don't you hide behind a chair and yell 'Boo' at him?"

* * *

"Mother, can I be a preacher when I grow up?"

"Of course you may, dear, if you want to."

"Yes, I do. I s'pose I've got to go to church all my life, anyhow; an' it's a good deal harder to sit still than it is to walk around and holler."

* * *

"You say Smithers is a strict vegetarian?"

"Yeah, he won't even let his kids eat animal crackers."

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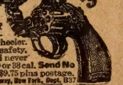

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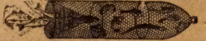

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A Slip In the Dance

(Continued From Page 2.)

son's most fashionable affair at which Mrs. Childress would announce the engagement of her daughter to Chester Weatherbee, son of the railroad magnate.

Shortly before 8 o'clock the guests began to arrive. Shining machines purred up to the entrance and unloaded their passengers, who strolled up the walk, chatting lively. Inside, women in gorgeous evening gowns began to pass along the receiving line. Behind a group of artistically arranged palms an orchestra was playing softly.

Lawson was a late arrival. Parking his roadster half-way down the block he stepped out leisurely and made his way toward the front of the place. Confound these social events! He dreaded the incessant chatter of the women and the languid, bored conversation of the men. But it was vitally important that he be present. He was driving one of the most important spikes in the foundation of his carefully laid plans.

He passed along the receiving line, exchanging remarks with the ladies and paused to congratulate Alice Childress. A few minutes later he strolled out on the veranda and lit a cigar. He looked at his timepiece. Nine thirty. Plenty of time. In a corner a group of men were discussing a political election. He walked up and took part.

The time dragged slowly. At 10 o'clock the dancing began. Lawson sought his partner for the first number and shortly was gliding over the polished floor. He breathed a sigh of relief when the music stopped. As he left the floor he was accosted by Mrs. Childress. Her sequin gown was accentuated by a display of glittering jewels.

"Ah, Mr. Lawson," she laughed merrily. "And how are you this evening?"

"As fit as a fiddle," he returned. "Yet I regret the absence of our fair hostess' name on my card."

"And may I share your regret?" she smiled, taking his arm. Together they passed out on the veranda.

"I'm looking forward to the mysterious dancer's number" he said. "I've seen her once before. Who is she?"

"That's a secret," Miss Childress laughed. "You're not the first to ask that question to night, Mr. Lawson. There are a dozen who would like to know the same thing"

"Well, I won't insist," he smiled.

"It was quite a bit of trouble arranging to get her for this evening," said the hostess. "But thank goodness, I managed it. She will give a complete program."

THE sound of the orchestra caused her to hurry off. The others strolled inside for the dance. Lawson was alone. So she was going to render a full performance? That would require forty minutes. Good! He could complete his work easily in that length of time.

A few minutes before 11 Mrs. Childress advanced to the center of the floor. The laughter and hum of voices quieted down.

"And now for our surprise number," she said, looking about. "The unknown dancer who created a sensation at Mrs. Schulman's reception a few weeks ago. She has consented to repeat the performance for us this evening."

As she ceased the bright lights were suddenly extinguished. From a corner a spot light cast its thin beam out across the darkened floor. The orchestra began playing softly, a weird, plaintive melody. Gradually the music increased in intensity. From behind a curtained space on the opposite side of the room a figure in white stepped forth. She bowed low, then straightened up and circled out on the floor. A ripple of applause greeted her appearance.

From his position just inside the doorway Lawson watched the proceedings impatiently. He looked at his watch as Mrs. Childress made her announcement. Ten fifty. As the room was plunged into darkness he stepped back and made his way to the veranda. A hasty glance about told him that he was alone. Then he tipped over and leaped down. No one was in sight as he hurried down the walk and reached his car. From under the seat he took out a long coat and cap. He donned these quickly. Then he set out briskly down the street.

Ten minutes later he reached the home of Edgar Davis. In a downstairs room a light was burning. The remainder of the place was shrouded in darkness. As he reached the front door Lawson pulled on a pair of gloves and rang the bell. A moment later Davis appeared in the hallway.

"Why, come in, Mr. Lawson," he greeted in surprise. "I thought you were at the Childress reception."

"I was." Lawson smiled as he walked in. "Just dropped over for a few minutes. Thought of something I failed to say at the office this afternoon."

He looked about quickly as he passed into the library. His eye fell on a revolver which lay on the edge of the table. A small black bag reposed beside the weapon.

"I see you believe in preparedness," he laughed, sinking into a chair. "Not taking chances, eh?"

Davis shook his head. "Not on your life. Twenty-five thousand dollars is a lot of money. In all these years I haven't had any trouble, but there's no use getting careless. You know my wife spends the night over at her sister's when I go to the mill. It isn't safe for her when I leave at midnight."

Lawson nodded and cleared his throat. His heart hammered at his ribs as he settled back. Outwardly he was calm.

"What I failed to tell you," he began, "was that you are to get in touch with Stevens as soon as you reach Daleton. Let him tell you just how to go about increasing the men's pay. Some will get more than others. I want you to see that the raise doesn't exceed ten thousand dollars. Be careful about that. I don't care to make the men sore. I want each and every one to feel that they're getting what they deserve."

"I thought about that," answered Davis, nodding. "I took for granted that it would be about 10 per cent increase for all."

Lawson shook his head quickly. "Not at all. Some aren't entitled to it. Leave it to Stevens. He knows the lay of the land."

He was sparring for time. Outside the night was quiet. Off in the distance the cutout of an automobile sounded faintly.

"Then I'll let Stevens handle the whole thing, provided he stays within the limit," said Davis.

Lawson nodded. He was listening intently. Looking at his watch he noted that the hands pointed to 11:15. The train was overdue two minutes. Would it never pass? His hands trembled slightly as he opened his coat and reached for a smoke. Suddenly the shriek of a locomotive split the air. Lawson could scarcely restrain a start. The hour was at hand!

"That's the Southern, isn't it?" he asked casually.

"Yes, sir. It passes just about two hundred yards behind the house. You can see it make the curve."

AS LAWSON turned the powerful light of the engine swept the countryside when it rounded the bend. Then it straightened out and the train thundered onward. Now it was at a point almost opposite the house. Nothing was heard save the hissing of steam and the steady roar as the cars rattled over the rails. Again the whistle sounded—a long, loud wail.

The sound brought Lawson into action. Like a flash he whipped out an automatic, thrust the muzzle close to the startled Davis' head and pulled the trigger.

Even in the room the report was scarcely audible above the noise of the train. Davis staggered, a bewildered look on his face. Without a work he crumpled to the floor, arms outstretched.

Lawson acted quickly. There was no time to lose. He had gone over this particular incident a score of times. He moved as tho enacting a carefully rehearsed drama. Returning the automatic to his pocket he picked up Davis' weapon and placed it on the floor within a few inches of the man's hand. From an outside pocket he took out an envelope and slipped it into Davis' coat. With a quick motion he swept the contents of the table top to the floor. Stepping back he looked about. Satisfied, he reached for the black bag and disappeared into the night.

THE unknown dancer was executing the intricate steps of her third interpretation as Lawson strolled up and leaned against the door. Lightly she glided about the floor, drawing gasps of "admiration from the onlookers. The music ended with a crash. A thunderous burst of applause broke from the guests as the lights were switched on and she bowed her way from the floor. Thrice she came out and acknowledged the ovation.

Immediately the banquet followed in the spacious dining-room. Lawson passed from the ballroom floor, loudly praising the exhibition just witnessed. As he had seen the performance once before, he was thoroly acquainted with the dance.

He was calm and collected. Now that the work had been accomplished, he wondered that he had hesitated. It had been comparatively simple. His carefully prepared plans had been carried out as smoothly as a finely adjusted motor.

He was safe. The money would prevent exposure and subsequent disgrace. He could now cover the shortage before Speed's return. During his partner's absence he had invested and lost—money that belonged to the firm. He had been driven to it in desperation, having squandered practically every dollar of his own already. A curt note from his broker had informed him during the afternoon of the market's slump.

As the evening wore on Lawson surprised himself. A feeling of elation possessed him. It was as tho a heavy burden had been lifted from his shoulders. During the meal his was one of the most appropriate impromptu speeches. His jokes provoked bursts of laughter. Every one voted him the life of the party.

Lawson slept but little during the night. For a long time he lay in bed, reviewing the happenings of the past eight hours. Over and over he followed each move. There had been no slip.

At midnight he was still awake. Rising, he lowered the shades and tried to read. His mind was unable to concentrate on the book and he laid it aside. A dozen cigarette stumps indicated that tobacco was doing little toward satisfying him

Finally he dozed in the heavy armchair. But only for a short time. He sat up with a start, the cold perspiration on his face. Looking at the clock he noted that it was almost 5 o'clock. Making his way to the bathroom he took a shower and dressed. Shortly before 6 he was holding a copy of the morning paper, glancing anxiously over the headlines. He paused for a moment as his eye caught a picture of Alice Childress. Below was an account of the event in her honor. Then he turned the page quickly.

There was no mention of Davis. Too early, he reflected, throwing the paper on the bed. The afternoon sheet would cover the case

HE WAS calm as he walked into the office shortly after 8 o'clock. He looked at the pile of mail on his desk and began to sort it out absently. Suddenly the door was flung open. Richard Speed stood on the threshold, his face white. Lawson's heart jumped. Speed knew!

"What's the matter, Speed?" he exclaimed. "You're pale as a ghost."

"Davis was murdered last night," gasped the other, sinking into a chair. "Just heard about it. Hadn't been in town over an hour when they 'phoned me." He broke off, panting.

Lawson's eyes opened in well stimulated surprise.

"What's that?" he demanded, grasping Speed's arm and shaking him. "Davis murdered?"

Speed nodded. "I rang your house but you had just left for the office. I hurried down."

"Who did it?" asked Lawson. His nails dug into his palms as he waited for an answer.

Speed shook his head. "Don't know. The servant found his body about 6:30. They shot him and got away with the pay roll. He was to go to the mill last night."

"What's being done about it?" ripped out Lawson, reaching for his hat. "Have you notified the police?"

Speed nodded and lifted his hand. "Let me get my breath. We can talk on the way out. My car is downstairs."

Five minutes later they were speeding along the pavement. Speed, a thin, middle-aged man, had partly regained his composure.

(Continued on Page 14.)

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HE CAME FROM THE COUNTRY

BY GEORGE M. JOHNSON

JEFFERSON TUTTLE was lonesome, hungry for the solace of human companionship. It was now three years since he had headed for the city, his brain crowded with vague ambitions which as yet showed little signs of fulfillment. Jeff realized his own weakness without knowing how to combat it—a lack of push, initiative, the all-conquering impulse to forge ahead. Pleasant of manner, even good looking, he was none the less a poor mixer; did not make friends readily. Rapidly he was developing into that hopeless type, the plodder.

"The fellows in the office have me tagged as a dub," he mused bitterly, "and I guess they're right. A dub!"

He walked onward thru the teeming streets, mingling with the crowd and yet not of it. For all his three years in New York, Jeff Tuttle was still an alien.

When the young man reached his room, an uninspiring room in a cheerless boarding-house, he found a letter waiting for him. An unmistakably feminine hand had addressed it.

"What the deuce?" muttered Jeff, as he expectantly ripped open the envolope.

A faint suggestion of delicate perfume floated shyly out into the air of Jeff's room. He unfolded the double sheet of note paper, his eyes devouring the script:

> Miss Doris Chamberlain accepts with much pleasure the kind invitation of Mr. Jefferson Tuttle to dinner and the theater on the evening of March the first."

"Well, I'll be totally blistered!" and a helpless, dazed expression crept over Jeff's face. He pawed nervously at the envelope, examining it minutely front and back. Then the note again. The whole thing was a mystery.

Doris Chamberlain he knew very well by sight—one of the numerous girls employed at the office where Jeff himself had worked. He had admired her from a distance. But why should she be writing to him? Accepting an invitation he had never dreamed of sending? Suddenly Jeff slapped his knee.

"This is nothing but one of Jack Enderby's practical jokes. The poor fish has sent that girl an invite with my name tacked to it. There's no one else in the office low enough to pull a stunt like this. Why, that bird hasn't any more sense of propriety than a baked parsnip!"

Viewed in this light the affair proved less difficult of comprehension. Young Enderby was a confirmed practical joker, of the most virulent type. Few in the office outside the executives seemed exempt from his unwelcome attentions, tho Jack was shrewd enough to see that the quaint conceits he perpetrated did not interfere with business routine

Two or three victims had threatened to punch his head, but even this had not sufficed to keep his exuberant spirits in check. Double barreled jokes, involving two persons—preferably of opposite sexes—were his specialty.

"Mailing a girl an invitation in another chap's name is just about his speed," Jeff growled to himself. "That would tickle his sense of humor, dad burn him! I hope he chokes to death laughing!"

Jefferson Tuttle was fairly demoralized by the arrival of that formally worded little note, one minute sorry for the innocent victim of the questionable jest, and the next angry at its originator.

But what to do? Face Enderby and have it out with him? Inflict upon that heedless youth the punishment he so richly merited? Such a course would not make Miss Chamberlain's humiliation and embarrassment any the less acute, however much Jeff might enjoy the process of chastisement.

"She's going to feel terrible when she finds out," he mused.

Then a sudden daring thought struck him. Why need she find out? Why not carry thru just as if he had actually sent the invitation?

"Oh, gosh!" Jeff gulped, blushing at the mere thought. "Me take a city-bred girl like her to dinner and the theater!"

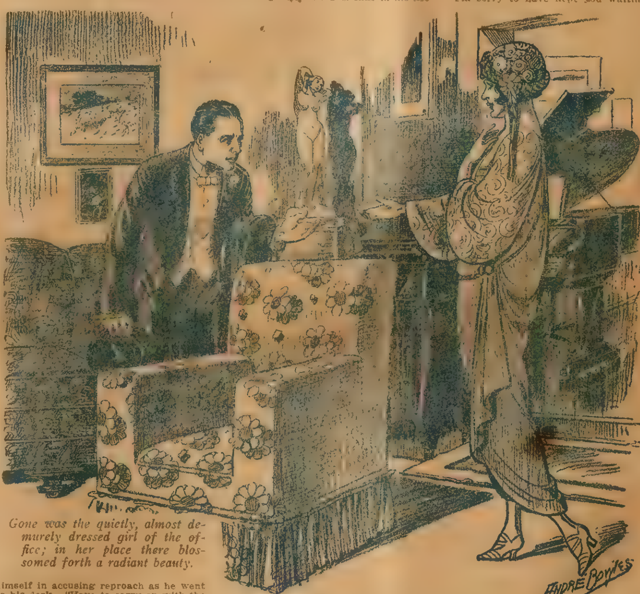
Whereupon his other self stepped into the argument.

"She accepted your invitation, didn't she? That is, she accepted what she thought was your invitation. If she can stand it you ought to pull thru.

Jeff visualized Doris Chamberlain, as he had seen her scores of times in the office. Occasionally she had spoken to him—a pleasant "Good morning!" or a few words about the weather. He had long classed her as nice, wishing he might know her better but unable to make the necessary advances. She was quite pretty, in a modestly quiet way, and Jeff had noted with approval that she did not powder her nose in public nor chew gum. But dinner and the theater!

"Gosh!" he repeated, dumb terror gripping at his heart.

How did you act when you took a girl out? What did a chap say to her? And, worst of all, what kind of clothes was he supposed to wear? Jeff hardly slept that night.



Gone was the quietly, almost demurely dressed girl of the office; in her place there blossomed forth a radiant beauty.

In fact he worked himself into a bad case of cold feet, and at last made up his mind to abandon the idea; to see young Enderby and compel the latter to get him out of the mess as best he could.

"I'm no lady's man," Jeff defended himself, "and this thing's too big for me to handle. I'm sorry for that girl, but it just can't be helped. She's out of luck."

He met Doris Chamberlain next morning outside the office. She smiled at him, whereat Jeff doffed his tile in a daze.

"I'm mighty glad you could accept my invitation, Miss Chamberlain," he heard a strange voice say, and then realized, with a shock of panic, that the voice was his own.

The girl murmured a polite response which Jeff was altogether too flabbergasted to comprehend.

"Now you've gone and done it!" he told himself in accusing reproach as he went to his desk. "Have to carry on with the fool thing after that wise crack."

"What of it?" his other self retorted defiantly. "I'm not going to see any nice girl's feelings hurt. You ought to consider it an honor, not a hardship, to entertain Miss Doris for an evening. She's a peach!"

"She's all of that, and I'd like to entertain her," Jeff moaned helplessly; "trouble is I don't know how."

"You'll never learn any younger, buddy. Find out."

That evening in the privacy of his room Jeff went into executive session.

"If I'm going to tackle this proposition I might as well do it right," he mused. "From the way that acceptance was worded I judge the party's got to be more or less along the soup and fish line. I've got to get me some togs. Ding bust it, but I don't know what kind to buy."

WHILE three years in New York had wholly failed to make of Jeff Tuttle a citified, worldly wise young man, it had in no degree lessened the fund of hard common sense which he brought with him from the country. In some matters, at least, Jeff was no fool. So he went exploring. He hung around the places where young men in evening clothes might be seen in company with resplendent young women; he got an eyeful—a raft of eyefuls, to be exact.

"Good thing Enderby put my invitation a week away," he mused grimly, as his keen eyes noted certain sartorial details. "I guess I can pick up the clothes all right, but what bothers me is can I learn to wear 'em in three-four days so Miss Doris won't get wise to the awful bluff I'm running?"

Fortunately Jefferson Tuttle had plenty of money laid by as a result of his three years of much work and little play; not that Jeff was miserly, but that he had little occasion to spend, outside of an annual trouting trip, his only luxury

So he went to it. Time was too short to have clothes tailored, but that made no difference; if every male was built on Jeff's lines the tailors would have to go out of business. At a first-class shop on the Avenue he found all he needed—dinner suit, shirt, collars, and ties, the correct thing in shoes and socks; a light overcoat; and then, resolutely, Jeff added a gleaming hat, a stick, and fawn-colored gloves. He paid the staggering bill without turning a hair, ordering the stuff sent to his room.

That night for the first time in his life he dined out in state. Every couple within range he watched like a hawk, soaking up social pointers by the score. Next day he provided himself with a silver cigarette case.

For a time he was paralyzed at the thought of the dinner-ordering ordeal, realizing too well his own limitations, but salvation came with the conception of a brilliant scheme. He sought the head waiter of a suitable dining place.

"I'll want a table reserved for the evening of the first," said Jeff, while a crisp bill found its way from his hand to the waiter's. "For two."

"Yes, sir?"

"And I want a snappy dinner served. What it is I'm leaving to your judgment. If everything is satisfactory, you'll receive the twin brother of the baby I've already slipped you. Get me?"

"Yes, sir. I understand fully. You may count on me. What name, please?"

Jeff's brain throbbed with exultation over this astuteness. After all, the thing was ridiculously easy. Now if he could only talk up to his clothes and dinner, he would get by in a blaze of glory. Doris Chamberlain would never suspect that hayseeds still lurked coyly in his hair.

As time went on and the fatal date drew near, Jeff found himself a prey to conflicting emotions. And not least among these was a feeling of pleasurable anticipation. There was worry, of course, lest his awkwardness betray his lack of polish; lest his rustic breeding give the lie to his clothes and the elaborate game he was playing. Yet anticipation was stronger than dread, and Jeff even began to feel that perhaps Miss Doris would have no occasion to be ashamed of her escort.

He called for her in a taxi, outwardly the cool, somewhat blase seeker after pleasure; inwardly a badly rattled young man, grimly watchful of his every step.

Doris, it developed, lived in a boarding-house of the better class. A maid ushered him into the parlor. Ten minutes later Jeff very nearly disgraced himself by gasping like a person in the throes of asthma when his partner for the evening appeared.

Gone was the quietly, almost demurely, dressed girl of the office; in her place there blossomed forth a radiant beauty glowing with youth and health, dazzling in an evening wrap which only partly concealed the splendors of the gown beneath. To Jeff's untutored gaze the raiment seemed fit for a princess, the girl herself not at all unworthy of her setting.

She smiled a welcome.

"I'm sorry to have kept you waiting, but that is a woman's privilege, is it not?"

Jeff wanted to swallow his Adam's apple, which suddenly had swollen to alarming proportions; he hoped his collar was high enough to hide the miserable thing. Instead he surprised himself.

"Not a woman's privilege, but her right," he murmured smoothly, "when the woman is as beautiful as you." While to himself Jeff added, "where in the thunder did that come from? A corking start anyway!"

"Oh, how nicely said" and she dropped him a mocking little bow. "But I suppose that's your regular opening line. Do you use it often?"

"Not so very," Jeff returned, "because I always tell the truth."

"Dear me! Don't you find it frightfully embarrassing at times?"

"Not this time," Jeff told her.

A glorious flood of self-confidence swept over Jeff; he felt superbly capable of facing whatever social emergency the evening might bring forth.

They went out to the taxi, and some time later alighted before a gorgeous building dedicated to the proposition that all men are created hungry—and moreover endowed with vast wealth wherewith to gratify that hunger.

Jeff caught a glimpse of himself and his companion in a mirror, and his chest expanded a good four inches. The right sort of clothes did give a chap an air by Jove!

The head waiter remembered him, his deferential, "This way, please, Mr. Tuttle," was worth a hundred dollars of any man's money. Jeff sneaked a look at Doris while they followed the master of ceremonies, wondering whether she was duly impressed by his acquaintance with this important personage.

He noted with deep satisfaction that more than one man turned his head to look after her as they passed, and felt tremendously elated at the thought that these glances reflected envy of him in the possession of so stunning a dinner companion. The girl carried herself splendidly.

"Like a princess," was Jeff's unspoken tribute.

THEIR table was in a good location, and Jeff nodded his approval to the head waiter. Then the meal began, served with that smooth efficiency for which the establishment was famous. Jeff didn't know the names of half the dishes placed before them; indeed, he hardly realized how the food tasted, in his desperate anxiety to make a creditable showing.

Yet he knew that he must appear natural, nonchalant, free from any suggestion of restraint; just as if dining out were an every-day occurrence in his gay young life. It proved less hard than he had imagined. The very surroundings provided an inspiration; the snowy sheen of spotless linen, the gleam of silver, the sparkle of cut glass, the lights, the subdued throb of the orchestra, beautifully gowned women. The whole effect of the place was intoxicating.

"You have always lived in New York, Mr. Tuttle?" Doris was asking.

"No, I'm only a simple country lad." But you should have heard the way Jeff said it.

"I must say you look the part," and her glance took in Jeff's faultless equipment. "Did you really come from the country?"

"Yes, I really did," Jeff grinned. "Delaware County, where they have cows and trout and everything."

"Indeed! I wonder if the cows would know you now. Do you enjoy living in the city?"

"Yes," said Jeff judicially, "now."

"Why that now?"

"That's easy. Now that I'm here—with you—granted the privilege of knowing you."

She flushed the least bit.

"You have a very appealing way of saying pretty things, Mr. Tuttle; but please don't feel that you must say them."

"I can't help it," he rejoined boldly. "No man could, under the circumstances."

"Truly you are incorrigible!" the girl laughed, but Jeff knew intuitively that she was not displeased.

After touching lightly on various topics of the day, their discussion turned to the drama.

"Have you seen 'Comrades'?" Doris inquired, referring to a recent Broadway success.

"No," said Jeff with particular interest, "have you?"

"Not yet, but it is a play I hope to see soon."

"You'll be seeing it in about forty-five minutes if there isn't a fire or something," Jeff assured her, removing two pasteboards from his vest pocket with a pardonable flourish. They were orchestra seats which he had managed to secure from a speculator at a ruinous advance over the advertised scale of prices.

"How did you know that I wanted to see that play?" Doris exclaimed in such obvious delight that a warm glow suffused Jeff's being.

"I followed a hunch," he told her easily.

"Really, I'm beginning to think you a very clever young man, Mr. Tuttle."

"Is my face red?" he demanded abruptly.

"Why, no," Doris replied puzzled.

"That's good. In case it was I wanted to tell you that the excess color was due to the heat of the room, not a flush of modesty at your words of praise."

"How perfectly ridiculous," and she laughed—a gay little laugh that played a jazzy tune up and down Jeff's spine.

"I like to hear you laugh," he told her.

"You do?"

"I'll say I do. It sounds like the ripple of a spring shower on one of my favorite trout brooks up in the Catskills, like the mating call of a song sparrow at daybreak on a May morning; like —"

"Stop!" Doris implored, her face crimson.

"Don't you like it?" he demanded, pretending a crestfallen surprise. "I thought that line was rather good—myself—if you want to know."

"Altogether too good," she informed him primly. "I don't deserve any such rhetorical extravaganza, and, furthermore, you know you don't really mean it."

During the space of a minute or two Doris assiduously devoted her attention to the food before her; for the first time during the dinner she seemed embarrassed. Jeff, thoroughly at ease, grinned as he watched her from beneath lowered eyelids.

"I can't compliment your judgment, Miss Chamberlain," said he, not waiting till the conversational break became awkward. "You are wrong on both counts. Everything I've said I mean; and you do deserve it."

"But you don't know me," she protested.

"My misfortune that I haven't known you before tonight! But we're old friends by now, aren't we?"

"It's nice of you to put it that way," Doris said engagingly. "But my conscience won't permit me to let you go on in the blindness of self-deception. I have some frightfully disagreeable traits."

"Naughty, naughty!" Jeff murmured in smiling rebuke. "Don't you know what becomes of little girls who refuse to tell the truth?"

"But I have," she persisted. "You'd be surprised."

"Confession is good for the soul," Jeff suggested brightly.

"Never!" she laughed.

The dinner was nearly over. Jeff glanced at his watch as the waiter brought coffee.

"Don't let's be late at the play," Doris implored. "It may be the smart thing to find your seats after the curtain rises, but I prefer to arrive on time."

"So do I," Jeff agreed. "However, we have all of fifteen minutes. May I smoke?"

"Of course" was her answer, and Jeff produced his new cigarette case.

The glorious thrill of achievement dominated him as he glanced about the room thru the haze of his cigarette. He had put it over. And he had accomplished the thing without giving Doris the slightest hint that this was his initial experience. How he had managed to do so he hardly knew, but the fact remained.

The theater was only a block or two distant and presently they joined the sidewalk throng drifting towards the various playhouses.

"Comrades" was doubtless all that the critics and the public said of it but Jeff was in no shape to form an opinion for himself, or even to follow the unwinding plot of the drama. He was dreaming and wondering what chance there was that this wondrous new dream of his might come true.

The curtain fell for the last time—all too quickly for Jeff; it marked the end of the most enjoyable evening of his life.

SILENTLY jostled by the crowd, they moved along Broadway, under the flashing electric signs. Desperately Jeff cast about for some excuse to keep Doris with him a little longer.

"I'm hungry," he announced. "What say we have a bite somewhere?"

"I'm not hungry," she informed him, "and neither are you—after that delicious dinner but two hours ago. Must you be eating all the time?"

"Just an ice or something," Jeff begged, determined not to let her escape.

"If you insist," Doris relented gracefully, and so it happened that for the second time that evening they were facing each other across a table in an attractive, secluded alcove which Jeff's eagle eye had spotted.

"I've had a wonderful time," said Jeff, after giving his order. That wasn't what he wanted to say at all; it sounded so commonplace, so prosaic.

"Everything has just been perfect," she smiled at him. "I don't know how to thank you enough."

"But what I've done is nothing," he disclaimed. "Any man could have done as much. The thanks go the other way."

"You can't stop saying pretty things, can you?" and she smiled again, a bit tremulously this time. "I——"

"Listen, Miss Doris," Jeff interrupted in unconscious and unintended rudeness. "I expect I'm on the point of making a terrific fool of myself, but—well, there's something I must find out. I—I don't know just how to go about it."

He broke off for an instant, while Doris remained silent, nervously toying with a spoon.

"Let me put it this way," Jeff went on. "Suppose a chap came to New York from

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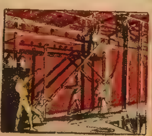

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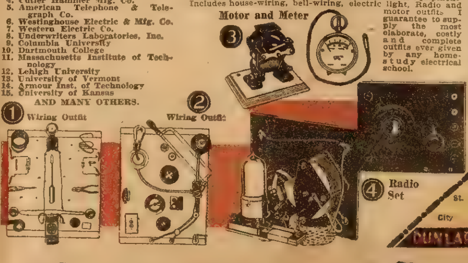

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the country, the backwoods, you might almost say. A young fellow who had never had much chance to mix in with other folks, especially girls; a fellow who wanted to make friends, but didn't seem to know the right combination.

"Now this chap kept getting more and more sick of New York; more and more lonesome. Every year he'd take a trouting trip up north, and now and then he'd go to a play—alone. That was about all the pleasure he managed to get out of life.

"Then one day he boosted up his nerve and sent an invitation to a pretty girl who worked in the same office with him—a girl he'd admired for a long time. He didn't even know what kind of clothes he ought to wear, but he found out and he got 'em. Then he practiced, so the girl wouldn't know what a genuine hayseed he was, and be sorry she'd condescended to go out with him. He didn't want to shame her.

"That evening when he called for the girl, whom he'd never before seen outside the office, and found how beautiful, and queenly, and gracious she was, he knew it was going to be mighty hard to lift himself into her class even for one evening; but somehow he managed to do it, so that she accepted him at his face value, not dreaming that he'd not so much as taken a girl to a movie in all his life before.

"And then this fellow—what does he do but fall in love with the girl who had been kind to him, who had given him his first taste of real companionship in three years of the city. And yet he was afraid he didn't have a chance with her, deathly afraid. What do you think this chap ought to do? What would you advise, Miss Doris?"

Jeff looked at her across the table, soberly, intently—the two ices untouched and forgotten. The girl's lips parted, but no sound came. Then she spoke, so softly that he hardly heard.

"Once there was a girl came to New York to earn her living. She, too, didn't seem to make friends quickly, tho she wanted to. Finally she received an invitation from a young man in her office; he had always appealed to her as a nice young man. She didn't have much in the way of evening clothes, but she'd saved up money, and she drew it from the bank and spent it for the best clothes she could find.

"It didn't seem foolish or extravagant to her, because she thought, somehow, that the young man who was coming for her would deserve none but the best."

Jeff could contain himself no longer.

"Do you mean to tell me that you're from the country, too?" he demanded, the light of a glorious hope dawning in his eyes. "That you've been lonesome and weary of the city—like me?"

She nodded silently; but there seemed in her no joyous response to the sudden happiness that welled up in Jeff's heart. Her eyes avoided his. He saw a tear slip down her cheek.

"What's the matter, Doris?" Jeff was gruff, harsh, almost, in his hurt bewilderment. Something was wrong, just when everything had all right. "What is it, Doris?" he persisted.

"I wasn't going to tell you," she whispered, "I thought I wouldn't have to, but I can't deceive you now, even tho you hate me. I never received any invitation for tonight."

"What?" Jeff gasped, completely dumfounded.

"I don't know whatever made me do such a thing," she wailed miserably. "But I wanted to get acquainted with you. I thought that if I sent you an acceptance you might think it was one of Mr. Enderby's foolish jokes—and—see—the thing thru, perhaps, because of pity for me. Oh, I'm so ashamed!" and in an agony of bitter self-reproach her eyes dropped, unable to face him.

Jeff shot a hurried glance out from the seclusion of their alcove; not a soul, patron or waiter, was in sight. They had the world to themselves. Deliberately he reached across the narrow table, taking one of her slim, cool hands in his.

"Doris," he said masterfully, "look at me."

All he could see was the top of her golden hair.

"Look at me!" Jeff repeated.

She shook her head in refusal. "I can't," he heard.

"Listen, Doris," he said softly, tenderly; "don't feel that way. Your writing to me was a wonderful thing. It has bridged a crisis in our lives; has brought us together; given us our chance for the finest happiness the earth can offer.

"But even that isn't all. I've won a confidence in myself thru this evening with you that I otherwise never would have gained. I've been a dub, Doris, held back in business and social life by lack of a vital something. I've got it at last, Doris, thanks to you and that precious letter. There's nothing I can't do now.

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"Look at me, and say you're glad—of everything."

She raised her eyes to look into his face, smiling faintly thru the glistening tear drops; to Jeff's yearning gaze she was more beautiful than ever.

"Are you, Jeff?" she asked

"Such a foolish question! You know I am, Doris."

Again her glance fell before the ardor of Jeff's gaze. He leaned forward, not to miss a word of her reply. It came in a whisper, just loud enough to reach his ears

"Then I'm glad, too, Jeff. I'm glad I accepted—you—your invitation."

THE END.

* * *

A Slip in the Dance

(Continued From Page 11.)

"The police called me," he said, pressing a hand against the horn as they turned a curve in the street. "The maid reported for work as usual. Found his body on the library floor. That's all I know. He had about fifteen thousand dollars in the house. Poor Davis. Never thought he'd die with his boots on."

Lawson nodded. A feeling of inexpressible relief took hold of him. It was another unsolved murder added to the police records.

"I warned him yesterday to be careful with the pay roll," he said. "But he laughed at me. Said the money was as safe as tho it were in the bank."

A few minutes later they reached the Davis home. Lawson hurried up the walk, followed by the older man. They were met at the door by a tall, sharp-eyed man whom Lawson recognized as Harvey McKay, plain clothes officer.

"Hello, McKay," he said, hurrying up the steps. "We just heard about Davis."

The man nodded. "Glad you and Mr. Speed are here. Come in. Tried to locate you this morning but you weren't at home"

As they passed into the house the library door opened and a man came out. Lawson caught a brief glimpse of the interior of the room. On a couch lay a form covered with a sheet. Then the door closed.

McKay looked at the man.

"Well?"

The other shook his head.

"Nothing doing. Everything clean as a whistle. Must have had some sort of covering for their hands."

"Haskill, fingerprint expert," grunted McKay as they entered the dining-room. "Didn't bank on his finding anything."

Lawson's nerves were steady as he sank into a chair. He struck a match and lit a cigar, puffing rings at the ceiling.

McKay cleared his throat. "You gentlemen are aware that Mr. Davis had considerable money in the house. Therefore, it's easy to find a motive for the murder."

Speed nodded.

"About fifteen thousand dollars. Pay roll for the mill at Daleton. He goes there each week. The person that shot him knew the money was in the house."

"And I warned Davis about that very thing," spoke up Lawson. "But he didn't take it seriously."

"Found his revolver near him," said McKay. "He must have grabbed for it but they beat him to it. None of the cartridges were exploded."

Suddenly the telephone rang. McKay reached for the receiver. "Yes, this is 2540. Who? . . . Yes, Mr. Myers, he's right here." He turned to Speed. "It's Mr. Myers of the Citizens' Bank."

"Well?" Speed spoke nervously. "Yes—heard about it and hurried out. . . . How much did he have? About fifteen thousand. . . . Yes, the pay roll. . . . What's that?" Speed sat up, his eyes wide. "Cashed a check? . . . For how much? . . . Sturgis? Good Lord!" He sat back limply. "All right, Mr. Myers. See you later."

"Davis cashed a check for ten thousand dollars yesterday afternoon," he announced in a dazed voice, returning the telephone to the table. "A check from the W. G. Sturgis Company."

"Sturgis?" Lawson frowned. "I don't understand." Things were breaking just right. Myers couldn't have called at a better time.

McKay reached into a pocket and took out an envelope.

"And your pay roll amounts to what?" he asked.

"About fifteen thousand," answered Speed quickly. "Why?"

The officer held out his hand. "I found this in his pocket. A ticket to New York."

For a moment they were silent. Suddenly Lawson spoke.

"That's peculiar. What was Davis doing with a ticket to New York? And why did he cash a check without particular reason?"

Speed sprang to his feet. "Why did he cash it?" he rasped. "Don't you see? Twenty-five thousand dollars and a ticket to New York. He was skipping. Going south with the money."

"I don't believe it," declared Lawson in apparent amazement. "Davis wouldn't pull a stunt like that."

"How does he get the money for the pay roll?" asked McKay.

"Signs the checks himself," answered Speed. "We've always trusted him. Been with us over eight years. Matter of fact, he attends to all our business at the bank. Lawson and I are out of town frequently and can't handle it ourselves."

"Looks like he took advantage of his position," said the officer slowly, lighting a cigarette. "When did you see him last, Mr. Speed?"

"About two weeks ago," was the answer. "I've been up East on business."

"And you, Mr. Lawson?"

Lawson was silent for a moment. He was prepared for the question. "Why, I thing it was about 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon," he said finally. "I talked to him about the pay roll. Asked was it ready. And come to think of it, he appeared rather excited."

"You didn't see him after that?"

Lawson shook his head. "No. I went from the office to the country club and played a round of golf. Got home about 7 and dressed for the reception at Mrs. Childress. They had quite an affair last night." Settling back he reached for his cigar. He had accomplished exactly what he desired—making known his whereabouts since Davis had been seen alive. He had left the man at the office. He could account for his presence from that hour until morning

"Mrs. Childress?" McKay looked at him. "I saw the paper this morning. Had some sort of special number, didn't they? My wife was talking about it. A masked lady doing a dance stunt."

"That's right. She gave an interpretation in three parts. A wonderful piece of work. I saw it once before."

"Humph." McKay grunted. "How'd she come out?"

"First rate," nodded Lawson. "I'd call it perfect. Didn't make a bobble."

"That's funny." McKay looked at him sharply. "The paper said she slipped and had to leave out part of the dance."

Lawson's heart leaped into his throat. The unexpected remark had the effect of a severe electric shock. Before he could collect his wits the officer rose and stood over him.

"I thought you saw it all?" he snapped crisply. "Where were you, Lawson, when the unknown dancer slipped and sprained her wrist?"

Lawson raised up, a dozen bewildering thoughts racing thru his brain. The dancer? He had noticed the account of the reception. But he had passed it with scant attention.

"Speak up," demanded McKay, his eyes boring into Lawson's with a steely glint. "Where were you when she was dancing?"

"I was right there," insisted Lawson nervously. "You didn't let me finish. I was about to say——"

"You've already said you saw the whole thing," cut in the officer sharply. "But you didn't mention the accident. You left the reception. You've practically admited it. Where did you go?" He pointed a finger accusingly at Lawson. The man had changed. His voice, hard and cold, struck terror into Lawson's heart.

"I didn't leave!" he quivered. "I was there until midnight. I can prove——"

"You were there until midnight," interrupted McKay. "But you were absent for about thirty minutes. You might as well confess, Lawson. You murdered Davis. We've got the deadwood on you."

Lawson's face went white. A heavy pounding sounded in his brain. With an effort he sat up and faced the officer.

"I murdered him?" he exclaimed hoarsely. "You're crazy." He was possessed by a frantic fear. Something told him that he had made a slip.

McKay's hand went into a pocket and held up a small card.

"That's enough. If you didn't leave the Childress reception, possibly you can explain why this was found in the room with Davis' body. I've already checked up on it and it tallies against you. Recognize it, don't you, Lawson? It's your dance card—in your own handwriting."

THE END.

* * *

INNOCENCE

It was his first motor car and it was her first ride in one. Accordingly, both had looked forward to this particular afternoon for some time previously.

No wonder he wanted to show off his mechanical knowledge, and, no wonder she failed to understand him. Everything went quite well until the return journey; then things began to happen.

"Botheration!" exclaimed the young man.

"What's the matter?" she asked.

"The engine's missing again," he replied between set teeth.

She looked appropriately distressed.

"Good gracious!" she cried in consternation. "Wherever can we have dropped it?"

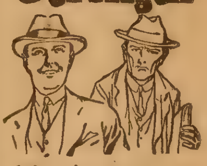
* * *

Recognition.

First Diner—I think we met at this restaurant last month. Your overcoat seems very familiar to me.

Second Diner—But I didn't have it last month.

First Diner—No; but I did.



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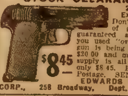

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A LITTLE OUT OF FORM

THEY had planned to elope. In their opinion, it was necessary, for the watchful eye and the strict denial of Jean Carter's maiden aunt had absolutely prohibited the courting advances of Bob Lengard. She had not the slightest objection to his showing Jean a good time, if she were allowed to go along, but when it came to the ultimatum of giving Jean's hand in marriage she had flamed up and given Bob a piece of her mind.

"I really think it decidedly out of form, Mr. Lengard," she said, with the slightest accent on his name.

Contrary to the popular conception of a maiden aunt's voice, which transforms them from their habitual, mundane form into gawky, spindle-like creatures with piping screeches and long faces, hers was a pleasant voice, a slow trickle of tone with the slightest of Southern drawls.

Aged beauty still lingered in the lines of her face. Why she had never married had forever, and will forever, remain a mystery to the populace of the town in which she resided

"Out of form?" echoed Bob.

"Certainly. Jean is but 19—hardly old enough to stand by herself."

"But——"

"Yes," she said, quieting him with a raised hand. "And I know what men are I was not young just to become aged. I had my experience with you all."

"Girls of today are different from those of your day, Miss Smith."

She shook her head firmly.

"You can't tell me what I know! They are only a bit more foolish. That's all."

"But——"

"Yes," she said, and then added: "What I said is final; Jean will not marry while under my eyes."

So the circumstances had forced eloping to become a necessity. The day and hour were set. All he had to do was call for her, then catch the train, which would leave in the next half hour for New York.

They would be married, depart on their honeymoon, and perhaps later return for the blessings of Jean's aunt.

WHISTLING happily, Bob prepared to go after Jean on the eve of their elopement. He packed his bags carefully, mused lovingly over the picture of her dainty loveliness, and thought uncomplimentary things about her aunt. Finally he looked at his watch. It was 10 o'clock. He had promised to call for her exactly on the dot of the half hour.

Happiness thrumped in his soul as he left his apartment; it burst into song as he was whirled toward the ground floor in the elevator. The wizened old attendant cackled as he said:

"Big time on tonight, Bobbie?"

Bob nodded. He was the only occupant on this trip, so he spoke bravely, and without misplacing his confidence.

"I'm going to be married tomorrow."

The attendant stared at him, and slipped by the ground floor and into the basement in his amazement.

"No-o-o-o!" he finally managed to gasp.

"Yes!" returned Bob. "And to the sweetest girl on earth!"

"That's what they all say," opined the old man, opening the door.

The chimes of a near-by church were tinkling out the half hour as Bob strode up the path to the home of Jean. He had plenty of confidence and courage, for he knew that he would not be met by the maiden aunt and ordered away.

She had departed to visit some friends in a near-by town, and was staying over night.

The girl appeared at the same moment that he was pressing the bell. She was clothed entirely in black, and a heavy veil covered her features. Without a word he led her down the path and guided her into the seat of the cab. Then they drove on. Bob leaned back in his seat with a whistling sigh, but content in his happiness.

"I was expecting to see that nosey aunt of yours around to spoil everything, dear," he said.

In the darkness of the cab she nodded and cuddled close to him

"Frightened?" he asked.

"A little," she replied, in a whisper.

SO THEY rode on. Bob alternated between speaking sweet nothings in her ear and calling down her pesky old aunt, who was afraid to let two young people have the rightful happiness that was their own.

They arrived at the station. She went to the waiting-room, while he settled with the driver of the cab and lugged the bags to have them checked.

When he entered the waiting-room it was deserted except for the girl. He approached her, took her into his arms and said:

"Just a little kiss before the train comes, Jean, dear."

She lifted the veil from her face. Thunderstruck, Bob fell back and looked for the nearest exit. It was not Jean, but her maiden aunt! What tragedy! She glared at Bob.

"I overheard you plan that day," she said, "and to make it seem clearer for you, I told Jean that I was going away for the night. This morning I sent Jean away and took her place. Fortunately, I am of the same size and height as she. The deception was perfect!"

"So I see," he managed to mutter "You fooled me completely."

But then an amazing thing happened Without saying another word, she slipped a note into Bob's hands and fled from the station. Wonderingly, Bob opened the note. Pencilled on it was:

"I didn't realize what I was taking out of your lives when I objected to Jean's marriage. What you said in the taxi-cab about me is all true. I know it now. Please forgive me. You will find Jean with the Rannells, next door to our home."

With a whoop Bob rushed out of the waiting-room after her. He saw her dejectedly making her way from the station.

With the courage of a knight of old, he overtook her, picked her up, kissed her squarely on the lips and yelled, like a child with its first toy gun:

"I'm off, auntie."

And he fled down the street like a madman, his topcoat fluttering in the breeze

THE END.

* * *

The Dry Land Sailor

(Continued From Page 6.)

flights up—increase your hatband and decrease your waistband."

"Foolish idea in the first place, this telegram business," uncle grunted, struggling to the fifth landing. "All foolishness."

"Lucky it wasn't my idea," Phil retorted. Then, with a mischievous smile, "But, above all, Uncle, I enjoy good losers."

Uncle looked up quickly. The first real smile Phil had seen since his arrival lighted his face.

"Guess you're going to win, lad. And just to show I'm not a bad sport, if I lose I'll double my bet and write the check—in the lady's name. For, if you do win, I'm not wholly the loser. Somehow I think you'll be a lot better off after the—say, what are you doing?"

"Trying to find page fifty-five. Seem a little nervous—almost tore that page out of the book—here it is, page fifty-five. Page fifty-five! The famous marching song, 'We're Coming, Father Abraham, Three Hundred Thousand Strong.'"

Uncle's face froze with surprise, then broke in crackly wrinkles. Without a word, he reached for his checkbook.

"She wins, all right, Collection Manager. And with a bang. Three hundred thousand strong! Probably bringing all her relatives; and, Lordy, how I hate big weddings."

THE END.

* * *

THE AIR CURE

A MAN was in the habit of attending meetings, which often detained him after the usual hour of retirement. One night he was very late and his wife, after fretting herself into a temper, went to bed, determined not to come down again.

When she had been upstairs about twenty minutes she heard a knock, so, putting her head out of the window she said: "Is that you, Jim?"

"Yes, Meg. Come and open the door."

"What has kept you so late?" said his wife.

"We were discussing the great benefit of fresh air for the poor," said Jim.

"Well," said his better half, "you can lecture tomorrow night from experience," and the window went down with a bang.

* * *

A Good Beginning.

Mr. Neurich was in the worst possible frame of mind to receive the would be son-in-law, and his reply was a decided negative

"But," said the young man, "what is your objection to me as a suitor for your daughter's hand?"

"My principal objection is that you cannot keep her in the style in which she has been brought up."

"Oh" said the youth. "At any rate, I can start her on bread and milk, the same as you did."

* * *

A Fellow Feeling.

"Can you fill out this questionnaire?"

"Say, boss," replied the applicant for the work, "I'm not trying to get your job. All I want is a chance to do a little manual labor."

"I'll give you a chance," said the head of the firm, in a stage whisper, "but don't say anything about it. Our efficiency expert made out this list of questions and I can't answer them myself."

* * *

There's a Reason.

Trotzky is a man of few words." remarked Brown.

"Well," answered the flippant friend, "you take a look at some of the words in a Russian dictionary and you won't blame him."

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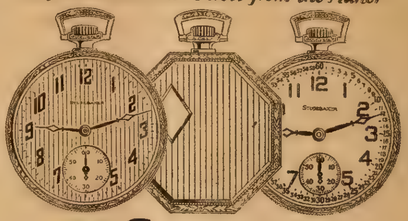

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Auto Manager, 504 N. Dearborn St., Dept. 10, Chicago, Ill.

The Crow's Feather

(Continued From Page 4.)

great, sharp pain pervading his whole throbbing body. Futilely he tried to rise, knowing that within a few minutes, unless he quickly prevented it, the rattlesnake venom would kill him. With excruciating difficulty he struggled to one knee—but fell again, helplessly. A burning pain seared the flesh of his pulsating left leg. Then dimly he realized what had happened—his left leg had been broken above the knee by his fall! He lay back powerlessly. His mind whirled, but by a grim effort he steadied himself. Seconds were precious now! Already a numbness was sliding over his body. Desperately he brought his knife from his pocket, intent in spite of his injury on cutting the poison from the spot where the snake's fangs had sunk into his flesh. His trembling fingers were strengthless—the knife fell from them, clattered away and dropped between two rocks. While his every movement sent fiery pain thru his body, he groped for it—but it was far out of his reach. Helpless, he lay back.

The sky turned red above his eyes. Loud ringing came into his ears. His whole body became intensely more painful as minutes passed. "I'm dying," he knew vaguely. "I'm dying." He called for help, but his voice was faint—a hoarse whisper. As he saw a heavy blackness close over him, words ran thru his head—"no use, no use, no use," and—"I'm dying."

Uncertainly he heard, as tho far away, an avalanche of pebbles come pelting down the steep side of the ridge. Rosson, lowering himself quickly by gripping the edge of protruding rocks, came into Kent's dimming field of vision. Kent gripped himself more tightly—fought against the weight of the heavy blackness —

"A snake got me!" he whispered as Rosson bent over him.

As Kent indicated the spot, Rosson quickly opened his kife and slitted the tight corduroy trousers which Kent was wearing. Two brilliant spots of red shone in a swelling area of black-blue. Rosson lost not a second. With his handkerchief and a twig he made a tourniquet and twisted it near the wound. With the sharp blade of his knife he opened the flesh. He put his mouth to the wound, sucked the poison away, and spat it out—many times. "That's not enough!" he knew. "It must be burned, too!" And there was no time to gather material and build a fire!

He thought quickly. He slipped Kent's six-shooter from its holster, swung open the cylinder, and dropped several of the shells into his palm. Plying with his knife-blade and his teeth, he loosened a bullet from its shell—then, quickly wiping Kent's thigh dry, he poured the powder over the cut. With a match he quickly touched it off. As it puffed up, searing the wound, Kent's head lolled back. "Bless you, bless you!" he gasped. Then he fainted.

Rosson worked quickly again with his knife, shuddering, but realizing that he was using the only means possible to save Kent's life. He turned to Kent's other leg. He laid the limp deputy straight and carefully cut the pant-leg away from the broken limb. Gingerly, with the utmost care, he straightened it. He hastened toward a group of saplings which grew near the base of the ridge, and cut four of them, whittling their twigs off and smoothing them as he hurried back. Slipping off his flannel shirt he cut it into strips and tied these into a long string, with which he bound the saplings along Kent's leg. Then he jumped up again and began scouting along the edge of the piled bowlders. When he found a thread of water trickling over the brown rocks, he filled his hat and carefully carried it back to the prostrate deputy. Moistening fragments of his shirt, he cooled Kent's hot forehead. Finally the blackness in Kent's mind drifted away; his eyelids fluttered open. Kent looked weakly up at Rosson.

"Well, hello," said Rosson blithely. "I guess we're coming along all right now, tho we're not exactly dressed to go to a ball. Guess you wonder how I come here, don't you? After you left me to watch that mark in the ground I saw some more trail marks up a little bit farther, so I went to look at them. Then I saw still more farther on, and finally I was following the trail myself. It was great fun. I caught sight of you in the distance a minute before you fell head over tin-cup down this shoot-the-chutes. So I ran up and came down and did what I could for you. I'm glad to a chance to help a deputy sheriff along——"

Kent nodded painfully. "I owe you my life, pardner."

"Well, that's all right," Rosson smiled. "I suppose we'd better be getting back to Still Corners, so that a doctor can dress your injuries properly. You just lie still—don't try to run away!—until I go get Cicero. Cicero is my horse's name. I'll be back in a minute!"

Rosson disappeared behind the ridge and soon returned with his own and Kent's pony. Carefully he assisted Kent into the saddle. The stirrups supported the weight of Kent's injured legs—the broken one was carefully padded against jars by Rosson's rolled Stetson.

Slowly, while the severest gritting pains coursed thru Kent's body, they went back to the sheriff's office at Still Corners. Sheriff Amsley moved about anxiously while the doctor from the forks set Kent's leg and properly cleaned the snake-bite. The physician told the deputy sheriff:

"Thank this young man for your life. His quick thinking and good work saved it for you"

THE young man smiled broadly at Kent. "Oh, don't mention it. I'm glad to help a deputy sheriff along. Now that you're all right again, I guess I'll go on to Woodhole. That road yonder is the one to Woodhole, isn't it? I guess I'd better start again—haven't anything special to do there, but I'm on my way and I guess I'd better go on. My lungs are bad and I've got to keep on traveling——"

"Stranger," Kent told Rosson earnestly as he lay on the bunk, "you make me feel right ashamed of myself. I treated you like a kid when I sent you back here with that fool message to the sher'ff I shore's mustard am ashamed of myself for tryin' to get rid o' you the way I did—lucky I didn't succeed! I'm danged sorry for all them harsh things I said to you, too. I'm full of gratitude for what you did for me.

"There ought to be more real men in the world like you," Kent went on, "and less like that no-account coward—called the Crow. You're a good man, pardner—thank God you're no measley critter like the Crow. If the Crow'd found me lying there with a snake bite in me, he'd stood there and been right gleeful to see me swell up and die. Yes, sir—lucky you was there!"

"Oh, that's all right," Rosson smiled. "Guess I'll be goin' on to Woodhole now. Haven't anything special to do there, but I'm on my way——"

As he shook hands with the deputy sheriff, his eyes looked deep into Kent's. When the young man, on his senile pony, had ridden out of sight, the Sheriff said, wagging his head,

"We didn't get the Crow this time, Kent—but we'll get him yet!"

"Bet your boots we'll get him!" Kent's six-shooter was lying on the chair beside his bunk—he slipped it from its sheath. "Me and my gat—we'll get him!"

As Kent looked at his gun he gasped. From its barrel he pulled a long, tail-feather of a crow! He stared at it in bewilderment, then exclaimed.

"Jumpin' goose-eggs! That young fellow was the Crow all the time! He's been pretendin' to be a young man from Boston! Think o' the stunts he pulled. He came back here to this office, brave as day; he watched me follow his trail all the time and never batted an eye; he helped me find it when I lost it, while he must 'a' been laughing up his sleeve all the time; a hunderd times he said, 'I'm glad to help a deputy sher'ff along——' and by golly, he even quoted Scripture to me! Besides that, he saved my life! What a man he is! He's big and white, clean thru. Some o' these days I'm goin' to bring him in to jail, shore's mustard—but I'll be right sorry when I do it. 'Cause now the Crow's a good friend o mine!"

Kent smiled at the crow's feather whimsically.

THE END.

THE PAST TO THE PRESENT.

By Henry G. Kost.

THE Past addressed the Present and said:
"You gather the harvest of seeds I spread.
I toiled and I toiled, and my heart and my brain
Mixed blood and thought with my soil and my rain.

"You boast and you blare of your progress rare,
Your comfort and happiness everywhere.
You vaunt your steam, you conceited microbe,
And your speaking-sparks that encircle the globe.

"You prance upon fields my muscle laid bare;
You dash thru the sea, you enslave the air;
And you utter with pride, that none else, beside
Your own ships, rode ever on fortune's tide.

"You speak of your mercy, my blood-thirst decry,
To vie with your era all others defy,
In grace and in prowess, in justice and fame,
Your praise with your brazenest trumpets proclaim.

"I lived as you live, and the human heart
Can not be transformed by fit and by start.
I fought as you fight, and my heroes were great
As any you offered to crown and to state.

"I thought as you think, and the human mind
Is riven by doubts and by prejudice blind.
I slaughtered for faith, and you slaughtered for gain,
And death is but death, tho of names he bear twain.

"You swear by your culture and, madly, you pace,
It need be, destroy an obstructive race.
I ate, when I hungered, of human flesh;
Your quarry hangs limp in your trade-woven mesh.

"I worshiped the sun and I tolled the bell;
I people the heavens and rancorous hell.
You ransack the sky, and the stars you hand down,
Mere ciphers, to puzzle both scholar and clown.

"Your comfort for body, your haste for the mind
The soul to its earthly abiding place bind;
You clip its aft wings and you hem its rapt flight
To the luminous orbs of the olden night.

"Yet day follows day, and the time, too, will be
When your breed shall scoff you, as you now scoff at me.
For pride meets its doom in its surfeit and age,
When the Author of All turns the self-sated page."

Child-birth

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Tell Me Your Problem

By Peggy Parsons

**A word of counsel when the heart is in it
May clear a year of trouble in a minute.**

**Dear Miss Parsons: I am a girl of 16 and love a young man of 20. He doesn't care about work and he drinks some. Would you keep on loving him and going with him or not? Mother doesn't care for him.
GOLD.**

I think you are too young, Gold, to know much, if anything, about love. If the man drinks and doesn't care about work, the sooner he passes out of your life and you find some good healthy interest and work to take up your time and attention, the better. I am sure, too, that your mother must feel much the same as I do about the matter. You are too young to marry, and you should not throw yourself away on a man of this sort.

**Dear Miss Parsons: I am a boy 18 years old and am in love with a girl, but I did not realize it until I stopped going with her. I have written her several letters, but she has failed to answer them. I have explained my wrongdoings and have apologized several times. What shall I do—see her personally?
LONESOME.**

If anything can help your case, Lonesome, I should think a frank talk with the girl in question would be the best method to try. Naturally, her pride has been deeply hurt, but most breaks in friendship come thru lack of understanding, and one should do everything possible to keep from widening the breach. So see this girl personally and you may be able to win her back.

—

Dear Miss Parsons: I am a 19-year-old boy who is in love. I live in the country and do not see very many girls, but I have met one who has stolen my heart and now she is breaking it. She goes with every boy around here and is being talked about by all the folks. I tried to tell her that she wasn't doing right and she said I didn't have any business to tell her those things, that she didn't care. Should I forget this girl? She means a lot to me. BIG TOM.

I believe I would forget this girl if I could, Tom, because she certainly does not really love you or she would have shown a different attitude toward your trying to show her where she was doing wrong. Go out with the other folks your age and you will meet other girls, when you can tell if you really love her enough to want to take such come-backs from her

—

**Dear Miss Parsons: I am a girl of 15. I met a young man last year and liked him very much. He seemed to care for me and called to see me one evening. When he started to leave he wanted to kiss me, but I refused to let him. After that he seemed very much fond of me. Later he left the city and said he would write to me. After ten days I received a letter from him, but not since then. Do you think I will hear from him again? Do you think he will be back to see me? I am going with a young boy now and when he calls to see me he stays very late and mother has to tell me it is bedtime before he will go home. What shall I do to have him leave earlier? Do you think it would make him mad if I told him that mother does not want me to be up late at night?
BLONDIE.**

According to my way of looking at things, Blondie, you are too young to be corresponding with any man. Most people put off answering letters from day to day, however, until they are ashamed to write, even when their intentions have been very good. Perhaps that is the case with your friend who went away, but if he really has something he wants to tell you, he will either write to you or come to see you. However, such affairs at your age are usually but passing fancies. So I think you would be wise not to think too much about him. As to the young man who stays late, it would be quite proper for you to explain to him as courteously as you know how that you are too young to sit up late at night, and that your mother doesn't permit you to do so. If he is well-bred, he will accept this in the right spirit.

—

**Dear Miss Parsons: I am another one of those motherless girls just 18 years old. I have kept house for my father and two younger brothers for six years. For almost a year I have been going with a boy who is much respected and he has told me over and over that he loves me and wishes me to be his wife. But his family is poor and he keeps up the greatest share of their expenses. I have laughed off the question, because I do not want to be married so young and have so little to do with, for when I want anything it seems as if I just must have it. Do you think I could get over that after I was married? I have a way also of speaking out what I think. I don't mean any harm by it, but it hurts other people's feelings. Do you think there is a way for me to control this? Do you think it would do for a poor girl and boy to marry with but a few hundred dollars' capital, if both are well known and respected in their community? Would it be better to start with that this spring, or wait until fall and have a little more on hand? I feel that I love this boy, but do you think we would get along if we were married, since we are so much alike and both are easily hurt? When he brings me candy, what should I say? He always insists upon a kiss. Should I humor him? If I promise to be his wife, should he get me an engagement ring right away? How long would it be proper to wear an engagement ring before marrying? What kind of wedding and engagement rings are the most popular?
BABY-BLUE EYES.**

Since the young man in question has certain responsibilities to his family, as you have also to yours, and you are young and not quite sure of your own mind yet, I should advise you by all means to wait at least until fall before venturing upon the uncertain sea of matrimony. When a girl's love for the man she marries is the real thing, she should be willing to make any reasonable sacrifice that seems necessary in order that they may get ahead—and he, too, must make his sacrifices. The time to find out whether you are equal to this or not is before marriage. If you cannot overcome your intense desire to possess certain things now, it is not at all likely that you will find it easier when you are married. It is the same about hurting each other's feelings—now is the time to see whether you can get along without doing so. Most of us get a kind of pleasure for the moment in "speaking out," but when we come to care more about not hurting others than we do for this short-lived pleasure, we learn to control our tongues as a matter of course, by controlling our thoughts first. We can change the bad habit into a good one if we try hard and long enough. Whether a poor boy and girl can marry and do well with small capital depends largely upon the ability of both to manage and save. It seems natural to some, tho it means the giving up of many little pleasures and requires not only love but patience upon the part of each. When your friend brings you candy, say "Thank you," but unless you are engaged to be married he has no right to kiss you. An engagement ring is customary, but not absolutely necessary. It is usually put on when the engagement is announced, whether that be a few weeks or a year before the marriage. The newest engagement rings are of white engraved gold with a flat setting. The latest styles of wedding rings are narrow bands of white gold, and they, too, are engraved.

—

Dear Miss Parsons: I am a married woman of 26, having been married for six months. My husband seems to love me very much. Do you think he will become jealous of me after a while? WAITING.

My dear young woman, if you have been married for six months and your husband seems to love you as much as ever, why should you have any fear of his becoming jealous of you at some future time? If you have a devoted husband, take good care to give him no cause for jealousy, but teach him that his faith in you is well founded and that he may always trust you.

—

**Dear Miss Parsons: I am a young woman of 20 and have been married five years. My husband has done things that have caused my love for him to cease. I have tried to forgive and forget, but I can't. I feel that I might be happy away from him with my two children. Should I leave him?
UNHAPPY WIFE.**

Yours is too delicate a question for an outsider to decide, my dear. You must look into your own heart and take counsel there. Be sure, above all things, to consider what would be best for the children and their future. Are you able to take care of them without your husband's help? Do they love him, and does he love them? Or would it be better for them, as well as for yourself, to be away from him? I do not know your circumstances. Therefore I cannot judge for you

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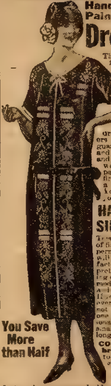

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This pretty model is made of fine Venetian cloth with permanent silk finish. It will give unlimited satisfactory wear. All edges are prettily bound in contrasting color. It is a slip-over model with short sleeves and sash belt all around. If you want an inexpensive everyday or party dress, do not hesitate to order this one. It is particularly fashionable for misses and small women. Will give long lines to stout women.

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Name.............................. Town..............................
Str. or R. F. D.............................. State..............................
State Whether White, Flesh or Brunette Tint is Wanted.

Ghost of the Borderland

(Continued From Page 6.)

overseas. Terry O'Donnell's swift glances at the various games told him that the players were all but helpless before the clever manipulations of the seasoned dealers even if the house were honest. He knew the operator's percentage for every gambling device and watched the play in the brightly lighted room with the eye of a dilettante.

"Not a chance—not an outside chance," he muttered as he strode from one table to another, anxiously searching for his friend amid the throngs.

SUDDENLY his eyes were drawn to the roulette wheel. Seated next to the croupier was Dick Harmsworth, his eyes blazing with the fire of gambling and his face flushed with the bad whisky he had consumed at the bars below. He was plunging desperately, throwing his chips upon the various numbers and muttering strangely to himself.

O'Donnell hurried to his side.

"Let's get out of here, buddy," he whispered in tense tones. "This is a punk show. Let's go."

Harmsworth laughed harshly, turning to his companion with a scowl of annoyance as he bet another stack of chips upon the number "seventeen" in the center of the board.

"Can't go now," he mumbled, paling slightly as he felt the diminishing roll of bills in his pocket. I'm in too deep. That guy," this with a loose gesture toward the dealer, "has got most of the firm's money now. Got to get it back."

An oath escaped Terry O'Donnell's lips. A woman, who had been seated next to Harmsworth, arose with a pale, drawn face and staggered dumbly towards the stairway. The young man took her seat.

"Come on, Dick, old boy," he urged in lowered voice, as the croupier had directed a savage glance in his direction. "You haven't got an outside chance here. Save what you have left and I'll help you make up the difference. They'll skin you alive here."

In response to a guarded gesture from the dealer, a house attendant touched Terry on the arm. He looked up into a swarthy, scarred face and glittering, cruel eyes. From the fold of the man's coat, O'Donnell knew that he carried a revolver slung under his left arm, ready for instant use.

"Say, you, if you don't like these games, get out," growled the house man, showing his yellowed teeth. "Your friend there can take care of his own business without your help. He's over 21 or we wouldn't let him in here. He don't need a nurse."

O'Donnell was not cowed. The word was missing from his vocabulary, but he knew the utter futility of action under the circumstances. His only hope was that the liquor Harmsworth had drunk might overpower him before the gamblers had taken all his money.

Many of those at the roulette table were playing the columns, others the colors, but Dick was plunging on the single numbers, hoping to recoup his losses with the reward of thirty-five to one paid for successfully hitting a single figure. "Seventeen" was his goal, for, altho he played others, there was always a bet on that, larger than the rest.

Thrice the little white marble had struck the slot bearing that figure, but thrice it had jumped out again. Harmsworth's eyes had widened with joyous expectancy as he half reached for the winnings he saw so near, only to turn glazed and stony in his disappointment. Again he played "seventeen." As the marble slowed in its flight, Terry dropped his cigarette and stooped to retrieve it. Under the table he saw the foot of the croupier press down under a hidden button beneath a blue square in the linoleum.

"Just robbery. That's all. Come on, buddy, let's get out of here," whispered O'Donnell, white with impotent fury. "I'll help you fix it up with your boss if it takes the last cent I have. Come on, Dick, old hoss. Let's go."

But Harmsworth drunkenly pushed him away. The young Californian was in the duel grip of the thrill of gambling and the bad whisky for which Los Santos is notorious.

"Let me alone," he complained in peevish tones. "I can take care of myself. Why don't you try your own luck? It can't be any worse than mine."

Terry O'Donnell turned his attention for the moment to other games in the great room. He bought a few chips at the cashier's wicket just as a matter of experiment and visited the table where faro bank was being played.

The tricks of the dishonest dealer in faro are few and well known to those who have associated with professional gambling and it did not take Terry long to discover the secret by which the dealer won the greater part of the large stakes. He had not ventured more than a few chips, always "coppering" the big bets, until he found the answer. Then he turned his attention to the dice games. As he had expected, it was the old story of the copper plate beneath the green felt covering, electrical connections and magnetically loaded dice.

"Nothing less than murder here," was Terry's inward comment as he returned to the roulette wheel and watched the play.

Dick Harmsworth had played his last stack of chips on "seventeen." No more remained before him and with a dry smile he indicated that all of his money was gone. Fascinated by the tragedy before him, O'Donnell watched the spinning marble race around, while the wheel turned in the opposite direction. The flight of the white sphere was becoming slower and the whirling wheel was losing its motion. The dealer shifted his position. Again Terry dropped his cigarette and saw the croupier's foot touch the hidden button beneath the blue square of linoleum. The marble struck the compartment bearing the number "seventeen" and again leaped out and fell into another slot.

"Double O—green—is the winner," droned the dealer, raking in the chips with averted eye.

Gray-faced, Dick arose from the table and staggered across the room. Terry rushed to his side with a soothing word and placed his hand reassuringly on his friend's shoulder.

"Come on, old boy," he whispered solicitously, "let's get out of here. We'll fix things up in the morning."

"I'm all right, buddy," this with a dry smile. "Back in a minute."

The swinging doors into the men's washroom closed behind him.

A shot. The sound of a body thudding to the floor.

A rush of attendants thru the swinging doors, thrusting the pale-faced young man from New York rudely aside.

The sudden appearance of a squad of olive-drabed Mexican police and the removel of a sheeted form, the resumption of play after a moment of buzzing conversation and the tragedy was over.

Terry O'Donnell talked first with the jefe politico in the ornate Palace de Gubierno. A shrug of the shoulders was the only response to the statement of his complaint. The very building in which the municipal government was housed had been erected with money from the gambling concession. Besides that, the jefe politico rode in an expensive imported automobile on his salary of a paltry two hundred pesos monthly.

The young man swore a good round oath and departed. Next he called at the residence of the village padre, but the good man only raised his hands to Heaven and let them fall helplessly to his side. A gesture to the little churchyard that was dotted with graves over which the grass had scarcely started to grow and many of which were still covered with dry, withered flowers.

'It has been filling rapidly in the last two years," he declared with a sigh.

LOS SANTOS was celebrating the Fourth of July with even greater abandon than the local fiesta of the week before for the tourists and patrons of the saloons, dance halls and gambling rooms were more from the American than the Mexican side of the line. Seldom in the history of Los Santos had there been such play. The establishments given over to the goddess of chance were crowded with eager throngs, struggling to give their money to the saturnine dealers, who phlegmatically raked in the silver and chips eagerly thrown before them.

The proprietor of the gaming rooms in the middle of the block, a sleek, heavy-jowled man dressed in a loud shepherd's plaid, glided unctuously from table to table, his gold-crowned teeth showing in a thick-lipped smile as he noted the steady stream of money pouring into his coffers. His flat-topped, bulbous nose bore ornate pinc nez over which he peered with dark heavy-lidded eyes that missed not a single feature in the scene before him.

"Good business tonight, Mr. Garcia."

It was the jefe politico who had come upon an official visit addressing the gambler. "You are making much money here tonight, my friend."

"A little," this with a shrug of the shoulders. "A little, but enough to remember our brave protectors."

Garcia disappeared behind the cashier's cage and returned with a handful of banknotes. The jefe politico glanced furtively around as the currency was slipped into his hand, but the crowds were too intent upon the games to observe the transaction.

"King loses and the five spot wins," came the monotonous drone from the faro dealer, as he swept away the chips of the feckless votaries of the game.

The roulette wheel and its marble spun madly, only the small betters winning except when the calculating croupier permitted a momentary gain in order to lure his victims to greater losses.

It was after midnight and the play showed signs of slackening. The whirl of the wheel, the soft voices of the dealers, the cries of sudden joy or sighs of quick disappointment merged into a drone that was typical of the surroundings. Garcia and the jefe politico were nonchalantly watching the play at the wheel when the doors leading into the gaming room were noisily closed and bolted. They whirled in time to see a ghastly hooded figure hurl a bomb-like missile across the room, where it exploded. Another and then another—then they saw no more. A yellowish, smarting vapor filled the room and they pressed frenzied palms across their faces to keep out the smarting gas that flooded their eyes with tears.

"Alma de Dios, I am blind," and the jefe politico slumped to the floor cursing volubly in Spanish.

The hooded figure dashed swiftly from table to table, gathering in the piles of silver and banknotes, while the stricken dealers pawed the air in their efforts to find something tangible by which they could steer their blinded ways to door or window.

The robber next turned his attention to the cashier's cage. The man in charge had been shooting wildly at the ceiling, too blinded to aim his revolver. Here a heavy haul was made by the white-clad visitor. Thru the glass covered eye holes of his mask, he looked sharply around the room at his groveling, blinded victims. In the tangled mass of arms, legs and bodies at the foot of the roulette table he espied Garcia. With a quick stride he crossed the room and jerked the gibbering figure in shepherd's plaid to its feet.

"Deal your games on the level and this will not happen again," were the muffled words that reached the gambler's ears. "Otherwise I shall call again and take you with me."

A rush of feet upon the stairs to the gambling rooms and the doors burst open as a squad of Mexican police dashed into the room. They had heard the cashier's wild shots. The acrid fumes of the gas blinded them as they entered, but the rapid opening of windows by groping hands and the breeze that was now coming thru the open doors, soon cleansed the rooms of their yellowish pall.

"Ghost of the devil," muttered the jefe politico, as he rubbed his burning eyes and then peered fearfully thru the tears that coursed down his hard lined face.

"I am ruined—ruined," puled Garcia as his lachrymose gaze encountered the empty money racks and the ravished cashier's cage. "The devil he may be, but not his ghost. My arm is sore yet where he gripped me."

"The ghost of the borderland. I once heard of him from my old mother," de-

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A WRITTEN GUARANTEE given with this .38 Special. Double action. Swing out cylinder. BLUE or NICKEL PLATED. A reliable, accurate, powerful gun at a bargain price.

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The Page Method is different. It starts from the inside and heals. It is the one most reliable, surest, dependable remedy for the treatment of piles. Send the coupon now. It will cost not a single penny until you are convinced of the results. On receipt of your name and address a trial package will be sent you absolutely FREE—as fast as the mails can carry it.

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The most important part of the Page System for the cure of piles is the little Page Pile Tablet and you will enjoy chewing one or two after meals. This reaches the inside, where the real trouble is. The Treatment also includes a wonderful ointment for temporary use while the tablets are taking effect, and a bowel regulator.

Chew This Pleasant Tablet

ENDORSED BY THOUSANDS.

This system for the cure of Piles is the result of twenty-five years' experience with every form of piles, carrying the endorsement of thousands who tell of the cure of pile cases. Many who followed this treatment twenty years ago still report not the slightest trace of returning piles. Many who have taken just the trial package have been healed. It goes further than a treatment prepared to give relief for the moment. Its purpose is to cure piles permanently by treating them from the inside instead of the outside.

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Without any cost or obligation on my part, please send me a trial package of your Combination Treatment for Piles.

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clared one of the olive-drab policemen as he crossed himself and fervently swore a prayer or two. "I knew that there would be bad luck today. My game cock ran from a mongrel."

Word was hurried to the frontier only a few hundred yards away to be on the lookout for suspects. The jefe politico and his aids searched for every tangible clew. The net reward for their efforts was a white, shroud-like garment that had been discarded by the robber in his flight and a gas mask such as was used by the American troops in France.

"Tear gas," was the expert opinion voiced by two veterans of campaigns on the western front as soon as they were able to speak. No trace of the thief was found. The guards at the gateway to the States searched vainly for a man possessed of much currency and silver. They found plenty of bad whisky and an unusual quantity of narcotics, such as are being smuggled daily across the border, but none whose possessions indicated that he might have the booty of a successful raid upon one of Los Santos' leading gambling establishments.

The week following, a similar raid stirred the authorities of Calera, where the treatment of visitors had frequently amounted to little less than highway robbery. It happened the day after the suicide of a young bank clerk in one of the gambling houses there. Stories of the Ghost of the Borderland began to grow until he was compared to Robin Hood. Homes of the poor in both Calera and Los Santos were visited in the dead of night and money left at their doors. The firm which employed Dick Harmsworth was electrified one morning to receive a sheaf of banknotes thru the mail that made up for the defalcations. The bank in the little inland town that had suffered thru the loss of the Calera suicide received a mysterious shipment of cash that replaced the young man's peculations.

Stories of the activities of the ghost multiplied with each new incident until it was the talk of the borderland. The keepers of gambling houses were constantly on the qui vive, posting guards at the entrance to their establishments who searched each patron.

Then came the village priest to the office of Los Santos' jefe politico.

"I am an honest man," the venerable padre began, as he took an envelope from beneath his cassock. "Last night some one left a large sum of money at my door. With it were three letters. One addressed to me, which my strange visitor said should not be opened unless the money were claimed. The second is to Senor Garcia, proprietor of the place robbed a few days ago. The third is to yourself."

The priest presented the letter and turned away while the other read its contents.

"Garcia's games are all crooked. He is a thief. Unless he plays straight I shall come again and publish the full facts of the graft you receive," the jefe read in bad Spanish. "The money is given to the padre for helping the poor. I have told him all in a letter that is not to be opened if you act wisely."

The note was signed "Ghost of the Borderland."

"Por Dios," the swarthy face of the official flushed in his anger, "he threatened me, the jefe politico of Los Santos. We shall see what we shall see."

"Do you claim the money for the city government?" the village priest inquired.

"Madre de Dios, no," was the profane reply. "It does not belong here."

To Garcia went the priest with his second letter. The evil face of the gambler turned red and then white as he perused the note.

"Do you claim the money that has been left in my possession?" the padre again asked.

"It is no money of mine." The man's brows gathered in a villainous frown. "You say that it was left for the poor. Why bother me with your troubles?"

With the departure of the priest, Garcia hurriedly summoned a tall American wearing square-toed shoes and a wide, black sombrero. A detective he was, who had been detailed upon the case in the hope of salvaging some part of the stolen fortune. They were long in consultation in an inner office. Then the Gray operative crossed the border and boarded a bus for San Diego.

TERRY O'DONNELL was packing his belongings in a hotel in San Diego when his telephone announced that a visitor in the lobby wished to see him.

"Show him up," he answered, and then continued wrapping a number of articles that he addressed with a letter of instructions to the padre of Los Santos' only church.

It was a square-toed, wide-hatted stranger that the bell boy ushered into the room.

"I thought you'd be here sooner," the young man began, as he took the visitor's outstretched hand with a boyish smile. "You're Mr. Lytell of the Gray agency, aren't you?"

The big man bowed as tho acknowledging an introduction.

"You chaps generally get what you are after," Terry continued cheerfully, "but I have wasted a couple of days waiting for you. I was just about to give myself up."

"That's why I came. To head you off," the visitor interjected with a grin.

"Now that you have me, what are you going to do with me?" Terry's face had lost none of its cheerfulness.

"If I had you across the border, I'd——" Lytell hesitated, a wide smile spreading over his good natured face.

"Throw me in the hoosgow?"

"No. Buy you a drink," boomed the other, bursting into a hearty guffaw.

"Not of the stuff they sell over there. I prefer straight American moonshine," and the young man joined in the laughter. Then in a serious tone, "But, honestly, Mr. Lytell, they're a bunch of crooks over there. Dick Harmsworth was the finest buddy you ever knew and they simply robbed him cold. I tried to get some action, but they're all in a ring—well, they'll have to extradite me and then——"

"They don't want to see you—ever again," Lytell assured him. "I'd have pinched you a couple of days ago, only they won't prosecute. Both the jefe politico and Garcia are scared green that I will arrest you. I just called to tell you that I'm with you."

"I'm leaving," Terry said with a sigh. "I've got to get back to my job in New York. I'll return tho, unless they mend their ways. It's going to be awfully hard to hitch myself up to details and desk work after being a full-fledged borderland myth. I heard that Garcia and some of the others have closed their places for repairs today."

"Alterations—I believe," was the detective's explanation. "I think they are taking out certain electrical connections."

O'Donnell cast an approving eye upon the package addressed to the padre of Los Santos. In it were one regulation gas mask, A. E. F., one shroudlike robe of white and three glass bombs of concentrated tear gas.

"You can tell Garcia and the rest of those wolves that the Ghost of the Borderland will be on the job from now on." Donnell turned to Lytell with a flush as he remembered the fate of his beloved buddy. "If they don't shoot straight, he'll visit them again."

It has been more than a year since the Ghost of the Borderland was seen, but the good effects of his visit remain. The poor still bless him and Garcia still curses at the mention of his name, but he deals a straight game. In the meantime the padre of Los Santos retains one regulation gas mask, A. E. F., one shroudlike robe of white and three glass bombs of tear gas in case of emergency.

THE END.

* * *

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INLAID or battleship linoleum, properly laid over deadening felt and cemented down firmly with all the cracks and corners well sealed, makes the kitchen look a hundred per cent better, but how to keep it neat puzzles many a housewife.

Inlaid or plain linoleum is greatly benefited and more easily kept clean if it is waxed. As soon as the linoleum is laid wash it thoroly with warm sudsy water in which a good mild soap has been dissolved. Wipe the floor dry, being sure to collect all the water, especially at edges and seams. Then rub a thin coat of liquid floor wax into the linoleum and polish with a weighted brush.

The daily care of a waxed linoleum floor is simple, as it needs little more than going over with a dry mop to remove the dust. Footprints may be wiped up with a damp cloth. Scrubbing seldom should be necessary. As the wax finish is somewhat dulled by water it should be polished with a soft cloth or brush after washing. The wax coating renewed in worn spots or on the entire floor as appearance demands will keep the linoleum looking well almost indefinitely

* * *

PRESERVING EGGS.

IT'S time now to get out the big stone jars and clean them ready for egg preserving time. Eggs are sure to be plentiful and cheap in the spring. Thrifty housekeepers everywhere "put down" a large supply of eggs now, while they are low, for cooking purposes during the winter months, when the price is much higher. Water glass is the common preservative. Drug stores sell it. Mix thoroly one and one-half quarts of this solution with eighteen quarts of boiled water. A stone jar is best to preserve eggs in water glass. Two six-gallon or three four-gallon jars are sufficient for thirty dozen eggs, using the amount of solution prescribed. After thoroly cleaning the jars, place the eggs in them and pour in the water glass solution. The eggs at the top should be covered by at least two inches of the liquid. Cover the jars to prevent evaporation, and put them in a cool place, where they will be undisturbed during the year. If the solution evaporates, or becomes thick and jelly-like, add water.

* * *

A Come-back.

A young friend of ours who has a fine collection of rejection slips sent the following verse to one of the editors who had returned his stuff:

Let schemers swindle the unwary
And sell them stock that nothing earns;
I choose investments literary
Because I get such quick returns.

Something to Make Thinkers Think.

Magic Sentences.

19—In each of the following sentences is the name of a character found in the Bible. Each one is of sufficient importance to give a title to a book of the Bible. The letters spelling the names are consecutive.

1. Our factory donates two hundred pairs of hose a month to a worthy cause.
2 While there I learned how very hospitable and informal a Chicago crowd can be.
3. With a boy builders' set your son can form arks, houses, bridges and boats.
4. As to music, the radio will transmit it usually so clearly that you will think it is being played right at your side.
5. In this little home the children are always obedient, and the little ones thereby are always found happy.
6. I am Oscar's teacher, now that he is in the third grade.
7. The song about the banana hummed its way from coast to coast.
8. It seemed that the rain was going to drip eternally from those great big, thankful trees.
9. A desirable dish at breakfast is strawberry jam, especially a favorite with the children.

Riddle.

20—Take away one letter and I am the same.

Take away two letters and I am the same.

Take away three letters and I am the same.

Take away all my letters and I am the same.

Syllable Additions.

21—To a tin receptacle add a girl's name and have the name of a large country of the Western Hemisphere.

2. To the past tense of a common action of our waking hours add a verb meaning existence, an exclamation and a consonant and the combination will mean contented.

3. To a domestic animal add a boy's nickname and a name for father and have the name of a tree.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES.

16—A Group of Trades.

1. Farmer. 2. Milliner. 3. Garage. 4. Life insurance. 5. Clergyman. 6. Surveyor. 7. Doctor. 8. Lawyer. 9. Real estate 10. Machinist.

17—A Word Puzzle.

VI-VID.

18—Four-word Square.

K N O B
N A V E
O V A L
B E L L

It is not desired that readers send in the answers to the puzzles. They are offered simply as brain teasers, and the correct answers will be printed the following week.

* * *

A Poor Risk, Anyhow.

Agent—You had better let me write that insurance for you, Rastus.

Rastus—No, sah, boss; I is not too safe at home, as it is, sah.

FULL HAIR GROWTH

"Before I started using Kotalko," writes Matthew Caldenwood MacDowell, "my hair was falling out something awful. The scalp was always hurting and the dandruff came out every time I combed my hair.

"These troubles are now gone since I started using Kotalko, and I certainly have recommended it highly to others. I wish you would use my letter and photograph to convince others."

Other men and women who were bald-headed, whose hair was falling out or who had dandruff for years, report new hair growth through KOTALKO. Legions of testimonials.

You may buy a full size box of Kotalko at the drug store under money-refund guarantee. Or you may receive a

FREE TRIAL BOX

If you have dandruff, or are losing hair, or if you are nearly or entirely bald, try Kotalko. It is different. It is GENUINE.

KOTAL COMPANY
473-K, Station L, New York

Bargain SALE!

SOLID gold effect case guaranteed 25 years. Richly engraved. Railroad model with famous Leanard Regulator. Adjusted for absolute accuracy. Backed by million dollar factory.

$3.87 C.O.D.

SEND NO MONEY Pay postman Sale price $3.87 and postage on arrival. Money back guaranteed.

FREE Genuine Waldemar Chain and two bladed Knife. Also Mah Jong "Good Luck" Ring if you order NOW!

BRADLEY, F-314, NEWTON, MASS.

$3 DOWN

AFTER TEN DAYS TRIAL FOR THIS LONG WEARING BALL BEARING L.C. SMITH

NO RED TAPE—NO DELAY

Test this wonderful typewriter in your home or office 10 days. *Send No Money.* If you are not satisfied it is the best buy you ever made, your expressagent will refund your $3 deposit.

LOWEST PRICES ever made on the world famous L. C. Smith full size—all late style operating conveniences—absolutely highest quality rebuilt — *5 Year Guarantee. Small Monthly Payments.*

FREE: Course of Instruction, Tools, Waterproof Cover all free to you now. Send today for New Special Offer and Booklet of valuable typewriter information.

Smith Typewriter Sales Corp.
414-360 E. Grand Av., Chicago

Under Ground Treasures

HOW AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

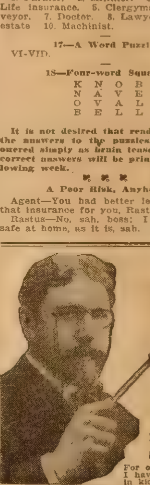
A SECRET you should know. It may mean a fortune to you. FREE particulars for stamp.

MODEL CO. 37 COMO BLDG., CHICAGO, ILL.

PERSONAL STATIONERY

Sell personal stationery with name and address, which makes for distinction, in your community. Every one will buy. Good money, quick sales. Send 50c for selling outfit. Personal orders of 200 sheets and 100 envelopes filled for $1.

I. ABRAMS CO., 12 Thacher St., Boston, Mass.



If You're Tortured by Kidney or Bladder Weakness

Muscular or Sub-Acute RHEUMATISM

I Can Help You

Don't go on suffering from a tired, aching, lame back—stiff joints—aching muscles, or unbearable kidney or bladder weakness. I have helped thousands regain their health—and I can help you, too.

Try This FREE

SEND NO MONEY—Just Your Name and Address for complete treatment—SENT ON TRIAL

For over 15 years I have specialized in kidney, bladder diseases and in muscular and sub-acute rheumatism. My three-fold treatment has relieved the most chronic, stubborn, long standing cases, after all other preparations had failed. I want to advise you, help you so you will be well and strong again; so you can work and walk without pain—sleep without disturbance and awake every morning like a two-year-old. Remember—my treatment is three-fold, it's different from anything else. Muscular rheumatic pain in joints and muscles or a kindred ailment cannot be conquered by a single preparation. All organs affected must be separately treated. I simply want you to try my treatment—test it out and see just what it will do for you.

Stop Your Backache Right Now

Kidney, bladder trouble, rheumatic pains, nervousness, worn-out feeling

My soothing, healing, penetrating medicines lessen excess uric acid, cleanse, purify and encourage the kidneys to properly filter the blood. Don't be discouraged no matter how many things you have tried—remember, skill can relieve such a condition. Simply keep in touch with me as your condition improves.

My Offer You can try the complete Lexoid treatment free of all cost—not a cent in advance. Write me and I'll send it all charges paid. This is not an offer of a "sample" or "test" package but the full and complete Three-Fold Lexoid Treatment.

Use half when it arrives. And only when you find it is helping you, send me a small amount—an amount you can easily afford to spare. That's all I ask.

Don't send a penny now, not even a postage stamp; just your name and address to

DR. H. MITCHELL DeWERTH
690 Lexoid Building Cleveland, Ohio

DR. H. MITCHELL DeWERTH
690 Lexoid Bldg., Cleveland, Ohio.
Please send me Complete Three-Fold Lexoid Treatment on Trial—all charges paid.

Name ....

Postoffice ....

St. or R. F. D. ....
(Please write name and address plainly)

She Carried a Muff

BY SABA H. NUGENT

If the young lady who was seen taking the black wolf muff from the Marybud tearoom yesterday returns it at once the owner will take no action against her. R. L. F., 128 Forest avenue.

"IT LOOKS to me," commented Elsie when she had read aloud the advertisement, "that you were the suspicious character seen taking the muff."

"How could I be!" exclaimed her cousin Bernice. "I merely left my own muff in the Marybud and went right back and got it. It was lying right on the chair where I left it. My very own muff. How could it mean me?"

"Nevertheless, she may mean you," asserted Elsie, smiling at Bernice's flare of anger. "This R. L. F. person may have lost her muff earlier in the afternoon and not missed it until she saw you rush in and grab your muff. You admit that you rushed in, grabbed it, and flew out again without explaining to any one."

"What if I did?" demanded Bernice hotly. "I was in a hurry to catch my car. Besides, I don't have to explain to any one about taking my own property. Just let this woman try to bring charges against me; I'll—I'll——"

Elsie laughed outright at Bernice's indignation. "Are you sure, you little fire-eater, that it was your own muff you grabbed up? You were so occupied yesterday with proving to me that no male could pick you up, and that any young Romeo would have to be properly introduced, that you might have grabbed any muff so you could hurry back to me and continue the argument."

For answer the younger girl dived into the clothes press and returned holding in triumph a muff. "My very——" she began, then the look of assurance on her face changed to utter bewilderment. "Ye gods! it isn't mind," she exclaimed, gazing at the muff.

When Elsie had succeeded in keeping her impulsive young cousin from rushing off into a dozen wild and equally impossible schemes, she suggested 'phoning the tearoom.

"Your muff must be there? Where else could it be?" she asked the impetuous girl.

"Maybe that horrid R. L. F. has mine and does not think it is as good as hers. But just look at her old muff, Elsie. It may be wolf, but its darned shabby. Mine is much nicer," said Bernice, nodding her little bobbed head.

"Of course it is, dear," soothed Elsie.

Later Elsie called up the tearoom, only to find that no muff had been found there. Moreover the manager of the tearoom was very curt. Stolen muffs were evidently becoming a nuisance to him.

When Bernice heard this, in spite of Elsie's advice she prepared to go in person to return R. L. F.'s muff, to tell the woman what she thought of her for putting in the paper such an incriminating advertisement, and to demand the return of her own muff. Her eyes sparkled with resentment, her cheeks were scarlet, and she flounced her head contemptuously as she donned her hat and cloak.

In twenty minutes she was at the door at 128 Forest avenue, demanding admittance of a prim maid who seemed loath to admit her without knowing her errand. The maid pleaded that her mistress was busy.

"I shall wait until she is at leisure," returned Bernice, and stepped past her into the hall. She was not, she told herself, going to give the muff to the maid and go off as a guilty criminal.

In the hall a most courteous young man appeared and invited her into the library. He seemed vaguely familiar; then Bernice remembered that he had been at the Marybud the day before with two or three women.

"Martha and my Aunt Ruth seem to have a conspiracy against all strangers in which they try to make it as difficult as possible to get into the house," he said and smiled engagingly. "Are you the very anxious young person who wants the subscription for the new Y. M. C. A.?"

"My business is more important than that," said Bernice with as much dignity as her five foot four could muster. It seemed to her that this attractive young man was trying to make fun of her. She wondered whether he knew that she had come about the muff.

However, he said gravely, "In that case I'll fetch her at once," and left the room.

AUNT RUTH was not at all the type that her nephew was. She was severe looking, with a most uncompromising mouth. She looked at Benice as if she suspected her of carrying concealed weapons.

"I came about your muff," Bernice began.

"So you have decided to return it, have you?" jibed Aunt Ruth.

Immediately a battle raged. Nor did Aunt Ruth Finch, despite her forbidding aspect, seem to be entirely the winner, altho, when all was said and done, the fact that there was no trace of Bernice's muff anywhere seemed to give the case more to Miss Finch.

Bernice demanded that Miss Finch apologize for her rudeness as well as for her slander in calling her a thief, while Miss Finch seemed to imply that she was being very liberal in not sending for the police and putting Bernice in jail.

Her nephew tried to intervene several times with no success. He looked worried and embarrassed and once or twice seemed on the point of offering a solution to the affair.

"You keep quiet, John Finch," his aunt remonstrated. "I should not have gone into that silly tearoom if it had not been for your insisting on it. As if I needed tea. Now you defend this girl whom you never saw before." Then she turned to Bernice. "Young woman, leave my house at once, and consider yourself lucky that you are allowed to go."

Bernice turned pale. Never had she been so insulted. But she showed no intention of giving up the fight. "I'll go now," she said. "But I intend to make you apologize publicly."

Then John Finch spoke up. "I agree with you entirely, Miss Maddern," he said to Bernice. "I side with you and if necessary I'll go to court against my aunt. I apolige for her. I never dreamt she would do anything like this."

"You leave this house, too," snapped his aunt.

Together the two young people left.

"I am sorry that you quarreled with your aunt over me," said Bernice as they reached the porch.

"I can't imagine my siding with her," he protested. "It is disgraceful to accuse a girl like you of stealing. I never thought she would do such a thing. If I had——" he checked himself.

Bernice looked up gratefully. "It is pretty horrid to be called a thief, especially when you have lost your own muff," she confessed.

John Finch thought so, too. He got out his roadster to take her home. When they were started, however, he suggested that instead of going home they go to every place Bernice had been the day before. "You know you might have mislaid it before you reached the tearoom," he said.

The search was unsuccessful, but the ride was a great success. The two young people found that they had a lot in common besides a desire to find the lost muff and to make Aunt Ruth Finch apologize.

John Finch called as a matter of course the next day to see whether Bernice's muff had been found. The day after that he took Bernice for a ride. On the next day he phoned to say that his aunt seemed to be relenting toward him but that she would have to apologize to Bernice before he would even consider going back to live there. He now slept in his law office, offtimes the lodging place as well as business place of struggling young attorneys.

At the end of the week their anger at Aunt Ruth was only a pretense to prolong the search for the muff and to see each other daily. John had confessed to Bernice that he had seen her at various times around the city and had always wanted to meet her.

"I never found any one who knew you," he confessed, "and you always stared at me icily or I might have chanced speaking to you."

The muff seemed to be Fate.

After office hours, or when John deemed it safe to leave his as yet meager practice, he would ride over for Bernice. It must have been more than two weeks after Ruth had sent them scurrying out her door that John appeared one day, smiling nervously while he produced the muff to Bernice's startled gaze.

"You did leave it at the tearoom after all," he replied to her exclamation. "The young chap who waits on the soda fountain found it, knew it was yours, and was planning to bring it to you after work. But when he got home that night he learned that his uncle in Boston had died, so he took the first train there and just got back." John spoke hurriedly as if anxious to have the explanation over with.

It was with mixed emotions that Bernice tooff the muff. She was cleared now of Aunt Ruth's insinuations, and she would be able to compel that lady to apologize. Also there would no longer be any necessity for John's aid.

AUNT RUTH'S apology, promptly delivered, did not give Bernice the satisfaction she anticipated. It seemed that Aunt Ruth was more than willing to make amends in order to get her nephew back again. She even invited Bernice to tea.

On the way back home in the roadster Bernice was silent. Nor did John seem to be his usual self. At length he asked her to go out with him the next day.

"Let's go around to thank the man who found my muff," she suggested.

John hesitated. "I wish you hadn't suggested that just now," he said. "I wanted to confess my sin first." He turned the car into a sparsely built up street, and rounding a corner drew up.

"Bernice, dear," he began, "I love you and I've done an unpardonable thing." He looked anxiously at her, but she was looking down demurely. "I was the thief and I let you be called one. I did it all. I lied about the soda clerk having your muff."

Still Bernice did not speak nor look up. John, the picture of despair went on, "I always wanted to meet you. When I saw in the tearoom that you had forgotten your muff, I slipped it under my overcoat. I thought it was a chance to meet you."

"Yes," encouraged Bernice softly.

"When you rushed back and took up Aunt Ruth's muff, I was startled," he went on, "but I still kept yours. Tho I ought to know Aunt Ruth, I never dreamed she would be so horrid about the whole affair."

"Why did you keep the muff so long?" asked Bernice.

"I could not bear to lose you. It was my only chance to know you. Will you ever forgive me?" he pleaded.

Bernice was silent.

"I'll never lie to you again. Don't you believe me? It's the truth," he entreated.

"I know it's the truth. Your aunt's maid telephoned me the day after I met you that she never interfered between you and your aunt, but that there was a black muff hidden in your clothes press," admitted Bernice in confusion as she hid her face on John's shoulder.

THE END.

Our Swell Help.

Mistress—And how many evenings will you expect off each week? I never give more than two.

New Maid—I'm afraid that won't do, ma'am. You see, I'm a debutante this season.

In Good Hands.

Judge — Prisoner, the jury finds you guilty.

Prisoner — That's all right, my lord! I know you're too intelligent to be influenced by what they say.

Gall Stones
And Gall Bladder Irritations

Dr. E. E. Paddock

For over 30 years a specialist in diseases of the portal region. Dr. Paddock's new improved home treatment for gall bladder irritations has received the joyous endorsement of thousands of sufferers. Send for his latest book on gall stones. It contains valuable information for every sufferer.

If you have stomach pains, dyspepsia, headaches, neuralgia, jaundice, loss of energy, liver pains or pains under the shoulder, you may be suffering with infected gall bladder associated with gall stones. Many people suffer and do not know what is wrong with them. If you do not feel as good as you should, send for my new book and know the truth.

New Improved Method
Avoids Dangers of the Knife

Before deciding on a risky and dangerous operation let me explain to you my new improved home treatment. Profit by the experience of others who testify my method restored them to health. Let me show you the results of my 30 years specializing in diseases of the portal region. Your writing me now may save you hundreds of dollars. It costs you nothing to know what I have learned in prescribing this new treatment for thousands of other sufferers.

Send Today For My Latest Book FREE

Just your name and address and I will send you a copy of my latest book without any obligation on your part. Read how others suffering like yourself declare my method restored them to health. This book contains a message of hope for every sufferer. Send for it today. Address

Dr. E. E. Paddock, 312 K. C. Life Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

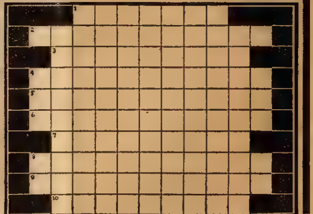
Win $1000.00

Solve This Cross Word Puzzle

Who Are They?

Horizontal

1. A LIL EEL
2. TEN GUN LENHR
3. ALDAN IN IT
4. TOMILSNS ILL
5. BEN DEAR LIES
6. CARL SEEL HOG
7. LEG ON PIRA
8. RAG ON CANDLE
9. RACEY JOLIET
10. HOY BE NEAR



Here's a new Cross-Word Puzzle for you to solve. We have rearranged the names of 10 Movie Stars into the peculiar sentences shown above. To solve the Puzzle, rearrange these 10 sentences and write the correct names in the horizontal (across) spaces on the Cross-Word Puzzle.

Probably you know most of the Famous Stars by name, but to be sure, we are listing a few here for you: Monte Blue, Lila Lee, Douglas Fairbanks, Noah Beery, Colleen Moore, Harold Lloyd, Pola Negri, Adolphe Menjou, Bebe Daniels, Richard Barthelmess, Glenn Hunter, Lillian Gish, Conrad Nagle, Leatrice Joy, Ben Turpin, Charles Ogle, Gloria Swanson, Milton Sills and Nita Naldi.

Learn How to Win $1000.00

When you have solved the Cross-Word Puzzle, send me your answer right away and I will immediately send you FREE full information about my Grand Distribution Offer of more than $2,000 in Cash. I will also send you a Certificate for 900 Credits toward the $900 Cash Prize, and tell you how to secure 100 more credits which will win the First Prize. I also offer $100 for promptness, or $1,000 in all. 15 Big Cash Prizes, totaling nearly $2,000, will be decided July 25th and will be paid promptly. If there is a tie for any prize, the full amount will be paid to each person tying. Send me your solution at once, for here is a chance to make a small Fortune.

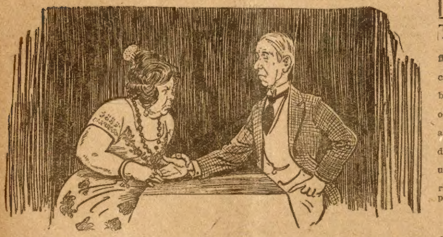
The Puzzle Man, Room 203 500 N. Dearborn St. CHICAGO, ILL.

15 Cash Prizes

1st Prize, -	$900
2nd " - -	200
3rd " - -	100
4th " - -	75
5th " - - -	40
6th " - - - -	35
7th " - - -	30
8th " - - - -	25
9th " - - -	20
10th " - - - -	15
Next 5 Each, - -	10

Read 'Em and Weep

HE KNEW WHO THE SECOND ONE WAS



The Fortune Teller—You are married. I see the lady's husband. He is a poor, weak, conceited thing, almost an imbecile. Now, I see her married again. He is handsome, noble, magnificent.

The Client—But stop, stop! My wife never told me she was a widow!

EASILY EXPLAINED

IT WAS during a trial at the Assizes. A burglar was charged with having broken into a lady's house and assaulted one of the occupants.

The man who had been injured was in the witness box.

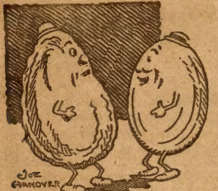
"You say you had called to see Miss Billings and that you were in the sitting-room with her at the time the burglary was committed?" asked counsel for the defense.

"Yes, sir," replied the witness.

"Then how," continued the barrister, "did it happen that, when the prisoner dashed into the room and assaulted you, you leaped thru one of the windows and rushed home, making no attempt to defend the young lady or summon help?"

"I thought it was her father," was the all-sufficing reply.

❧



Clam—Well, I see you're here, now——

Oyster—Yes, and I'm likely to get stewed tonight!

❧

A REMINDER

IT WAS at a dance.

The two men were standing chatting in a corner when a rather striking-looking girl passed them.

"Good evening!" she smiled at the younger of the two.

But the man only replied with a glare.

"You seem to hate that girl," remarked his companion when she had gone.

"Yes," said the other bitterly. "I once gave her an engagement ring, but she threw me over."

"Well, I wouldn't nurse a grudge against a girl I once loved."

"It isn't exactly that," was the bitter answer. "But it makes me peevish every time I see her. I'm still paying installments on the ring."

❧

Forgetfulness.

THE great musician had been entertaining his guests, and as he rose from the piano a gushing youth approached him.

"What a wonderful piece of music!" he exclaimed. "Will you tell me the name of it, please?"

"It was an improvisation," replied the musician.

"Ah, of course!" said the youth. "An old favorite of mine, but for the moment I had forgotten its name."

❧

LEG SORES

The Bayles Distributing Co., 1856 Grand Ave., Kansas City, Mo., will mail Free Sample of ANTI-FLAMMA, a Soothing Anti-septic Poultice that draws out the poisons, stops the itching around sores and Heals While You Work. Write today describing case.—Adv.

Not So Dusty.

THE Sunday school teacher had called on little Wilfred's parents to ascertain why the young man had not presented himself at the usual class for the last three Sundays.

"Well," replied Wilfred's mother, "the real reason for Wilfred's absence is because I fear he's learning things that only tend to make him mischievous."

"Mischievous!" exclaimed the astonished teacher. "Really, I don't quite understand to what you refer."

"You see," explained the parent, "it's like this. The last time Wilfred went to Sunday school he came home convinced that people are made of dust, and frightened me to death by trying to draw his little sister into the vacuum cleaner."

❧

AND HE WASN'T!

ONE of the new Cabinet Ministers was busily engaged with his advisers at his ministry when his wife appeared.

The messenger said: "I am very sorry, but the Secretary of State is very busy just now in council."

"Oh, that's all right, my lad," said the lady pushing him aside. "He is never too busy for me." And she walked in.

❧

Take Your Choice.

WHEN little Alex appeared at grandma's house wearing his first trousers she pretended not to recognize him. "Oh, it's a strange little boy," she said. "It can't be Alex, because Alex wears rompers.

"But it is Alex, grandma," he insisted, glancing down at his new trousers, "'cause I was there and saw mother put 'em on me."

A visitor said to a little girl, "And what will you do, my dear, when you are as big as your mother?"

"Diet," said the modern child.

"Why, Dad, this is roast beef!" exclaimed Willie at dinner one evening, when a guest was present.

"Of course," said his father. "What of that?"

"Why, you told mother this morning that you were going to bring an old muttonhead home for dinner this evening!"

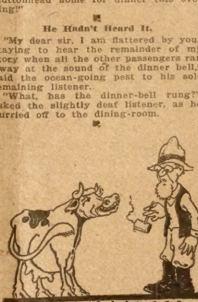
❧

He Hadn't Heard It.

"My dear sir, I am flattered by your staying to hear the remainder of my story when all the other passengers ran away at the sound of the dinner bell," said the ocean-going pest to his sole remaining listener.

"What, has the dinner-bell rung?" asked the slightly deaf listener, as he hurried off to the dining-room.

❧



PROFITEER!!!

A cow who was also a wag,
Once pulled this most laughable gag!
"I have heard the report,
You sell milk by the quart
That you get from me 'by the bag.'"

SOCIETY SNAPSHOTS

THE social climber believes that there is always room at the top.

When fashion enters the door, bills fly in at the window.

Frequently persons "in the swim" catch a cramp in their bank account.

A woman prays to get into heaven, but she fights to get into society.

Some people who think they are cut out for society are a mighty poor fit.

Frequently a society bud develops into a wallflower.

It is easy to get in the swim if your diamonds are of the first water.

A devotee of fashion is a dame wrapped up in herself and very little else.

Honor and place from one condition rise. Act swell thy part, there social prestige lies.

❧

He Knew Husbands.

Space Buyer—I should like to buy a diamond necklace.

Floor Walker—Um. Your fiancee?

S. B.—No, my wife.

F. W.—Glassware, aisle 47. Turn to your left.

❧

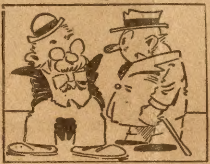
Ain't Science Wonderful!

Mrs. Timothy Hay—I see they now have electric machines in some barber shops to cut your hair.

Mrs. Al Falfa—Ain't that wonderful!

Mrs. Hay—Yes, and the most wonderful part about it is that it only takes ten minutes and they do it while you wait.

❧



"How can a man find out what a wife wants?"

"Oh, by just giving her a hint of what he doesn't want her to have."

WAS NOT FIT TO DO HER WORK

Dreadful Condition of Mrs. Fullerton's Health Remedied by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound

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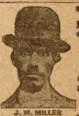

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They Were Happily Married

IF ANY one had asked Vinnie Holmes if she was happily married, she would have answered instantly, "Why, of course."

For wasn't Jimmie Holmes the merriest, best and most faitful pal in the world? They agreed so well in everything that they had really never had occasion to employ the compact they had made with each other before they were married. The compact was this: They were never to lose their tempers at the same time; or, if ever such a thing happened, each was to stop and think of palm trees. "Why palm trees?" Jimmy had asked. "Because," answered Vinnie, "isn't a palm tree the most peaceful, serene and cheerful thing you can imagine? Could you picture two persons quarreling under a palm tree? Of course not! It's unthinkable!"

Vinnie was thinking about this compact on a certain morning.

"We've been married five years," she said to herself, "and never once have had any occasion to think of palm trees. I'm sure Jimmie has forgotten all about it."

It would be too much to say that neither had been angry at all in these five years together. But the infrequent eruptions had been mere flashes in the pan and were over before you could say Jack Robinson. And both never had been seriously angry at the same time.

Vinnie hummed happily to herself as she stepped about doing the housework. What a dear, good boy Jimmie was! And how comfortably they had jogged along together. Life was a good thing, she decided. Especially today was she rejoicing, because Jimmie had promised to take her to the opera that night. They already had their tickets for a box, in company with the Gordons, who were particular friends of theirs. It was to be a gala occasion, for it was in honor of the Gordon's wedding anniversary and they were all going to have supper afterwards.

Vinnie had a little surprise in store for Jimmie—a new gown. She had made it herself and it was a work of art. Jimmie wasn't to see it until she was arrayed in all her glory, and then she would pop out from the bedroom and say, "Oh, by the way, Jimmie, how do you like my new gown?"

And Jimmie would look up from his paper and his eyes would sparkle appreciatively. "Why, Vin, duckie," she would hear him exclaim, "where'd you get it?" Jimmie wasn't one of those husbands who scowled when his wife put on something new and growled, "How much did that thing cost."

SO ALL day Vinnie went about with a song on her lips and a song in her heart. When night came and Jimmie came home, she met him with a pretty light in her eyes and a bright greeting. "Hullo, Jimmie boy! Supper's all ready. I thought we'd have it early so we'd have plenty of time to dress for tonight."

But Jimmie looked strangely white and sober and there was no answering response in his eyes at her greeting. He only replied: "I'm sorry, kid, but I can't keep our engagement for tonight. I've got some awfully important business on hand and I've got to go back to the office."

"Jimmie!" Vinnie was aghast.

"Yes, I have. Can't be helped." Jimmie spoke sharply. Poor Vinnie did not know it was his dislike at disappointing her which made him speak so sharply.

"I can't see what could have happened that is so much more important than our engagement." Vinnie's tone was aggrieved.

"Well, I can. You can go just the same--without me."

"What'll the Gordons think."

"I don't care what they think. I've got to attend to business."

Vinnie set her mouth grimly. "I shan't go without you."

Then Jimmie exploded. Vinnie had never heard him go on so. And she gave him as good as he gave her. There were all kinds of fireworks. Then Jimmie had gone out and slammed the door and Vinnie had called up the Gordons and told them she had a terrible sick headache and couldn't go to the opera. After that she flung herself into bed and cried herself to sleep.

She woke up in the night and Jimmie hadn't come. She was terribly frightened. Had he left her forever? And what could have been the business that he had said was so tremendously important? A tryst with another woman, maybe. Vinnie was harboring dreadful thoughts against Jimmie. At last, she heard the clock strike 3. She got up and crept out into the living-room, where she found Jimmie asleep on the couch with his clothes on.

Vinnie retired to her own bed without wakening him and in the morning she pretended to be asleep when she heard him tiptoeing into the room. He went out again soon and she heard him go into the kitchen, where he rummaged for something to eat. A few minutes later he went out.

JIMMIE always got luncheon downtown, so, of course, she didn't expect him home until night. She wondered if he would come then. She half hoped he wouldn't. Their quarrel was magnified the more she nursed her grievance. What a brute he had been! She had a mind to institute divorce proceedings at once. What did one do to start divorce proceedings?

"I'll go down and talk to Ralph Doolittle about it," she resolved.

Ralph Doolittle was a lawyer, but he was also a family friend. Yes, indeed! She would go to see Ralph Doolittle!

Vinnie dressed herself after luncheon and went directly to the lawyer's office. The pretty stenographer told her that Mr. Doolittle was busy with a client in the inner office and asked her to wait.

Vinnie waited impatiently. At last she heard the door open and a man came out. She gasped with astonishment. It was Jimmie. So he was forestalling her in the matter of a divorce. Heavens! She rose from her seat with dignity and met his surprised gaze with assumed calmness.

"Vinnie!" he exclaimed. His face was set and stern.

Suddenly Vinnie began to laugh. Something had popped into her mind, something she had quite forgotten in the last twenty-four strenuous hours. "Palm trees!" she shouted.

Jimmie started back violently, and then he, too, remembered the old compact. "Palm trees!" he cried; swept her into his arms and held her as tho he could never let her go.

The astonished stenographer sat with mouth wide open. When at length Jimmie put his wife down, the girl remarked, in a business-like tone, as usual: "Mr. Doolittle is at liberty now."

"Oh, bother Mr. Doolittle!" observed Jimmie, and husband and wife left the office together laughing.

THE END.

She Was Absolutely O.K.

MRS. TRIMM patted her ruffled tea apron with one slim hand, sat soldierly erect on the edge of a fraying horse-hair chair and waited for Mrs. Colby, the boarding-house keeper.

Mrs. Colby, a tired little woman with faded china-blue eyes and a sweet smile, came in noiselessly, offered a pleasant "Good morning," and sat down on the opposite side of the room.

Mrs. Trimm cleared her throat.

"I'm sorry I'm here to complain, Mrs. Colby. It's the first time, and I've been with you for seven years, but I am obliged to tell you that I do object to that—Mrs. Valoise."

"Mrs. Valoise? Carrie? Why she was a girlhood chum of mine."

Mrs. Trimm hesitated.

"She—doesn't seem—like you."

"No? Well, it's because life has given us different treatment. It was rather harsh with Carrie, I think. Life——"

Mrs. Trimm raised a deprecating hand.

"Life is what we make it, Mrs. Colby. But that is neither here nor there. Mrs. Valoise——"

Mrs. Colby rose.

"I'm truly sorry, Mrs. Trimm, but Mrs. Valoise will be here for some time. There is really nothing I can do. Perhaps if you knew her better——"

"I don't care to, Mrs. Colby, but pray do not be bothered about the matter. I'll stay until I can find another place."

"I'm sorry," Mrs. Colby said shortly, but she wasn't sorry for any one but Mrs. Valoise.

MRS. VALOISE, at just this time, was sitting in the spacious "third room back," filing the pink nails on one pudgy, diamond-flashing hand, wondering, ruefully, why Mrs. Trimm so disliked her.

Carrie was short of stature and overplump of figure. Her eyes were small but a deep violet in color with outstanding wide shadows beneath them. The coarseness of skin, dabbed with rouge and the elaborately coiffed yellow hair all accentuated the cheap effect that Mrs. Valoise created.

She was not unlike a 10-cent-store with its gaudy but fascinating appearance, its innumerable, cheap affectations. Such was Mrs. Valoise, the new boarder who carried gaudy handkerchiefs that seemed sopped in cheap perfume and who called every one "Dearie."

"That Trimm woman sure hates the sight of you, dearie," she mumbled softly as she polished the already gleaming nails. "She looks at you like she wished your meal would consist of iodine and paris green, and that one look makes the meal taste like ashes dipped in vinegar. Better give her a rest tonight and eat out—for friendship's and indigestion's sake."

So Mrs. Valoise didn't appear at the supper table that night, a fact which refused to disturb Mrs. Jonathan Trimm.

Years ago Mrs. Colby had taken as many as 40 boarders, but a year previously, finding herself financially independent and very tired, she bought a smaller house and took but five of her boarders with her.

She took them because they refused to be left and fairly pleaded to be taken.

Things were going very smoothly until the advent of Mrs. Valoise and the occurrence of a rather stupendous event. Mrs. Trimm fell ill. Her throat burned—too sore to allow her to speak above a whisper. Her head throbbed with fever, but, flat on her back, her lips tightly obstinate, Mrs. Trimm refused a doctor.

"No, Mrs. Colby," she said thickly, "I never had one in my life and I ain't a-goin' to start now."

Mrs. Trimm was not over-popular with the boarders. She disliked them. Consequently, they let her pretty much alone.

It was on the second day of Mrs. Trimm's illness that Mrs. Valoise came to Mrs. Trimm's door and knocked.

"Howdy. Now, dearie, don't eat me. I know you don't care such a stupendous lot for me, but no one in this house seems to have any sense a'tall, a'tall. I've brought you some lemonade, some gargle for your throat, a custard, and some flowers. Don't sit up. I'll put them here on the table."

MRS. TRIMM was surprised and couldn't help but show it, much as she disliked to do so.

"Well," she said, weakly, "you're the first one in here today, except Mrs. Colby, and she couldn't clear out quick enough. No good in a sick room, that woman. No good at all."

Mrs. Valoise laughed, a tinkly rippling laugh that didn't go with her type at all. Once more Mrs. Trimm was surprised.

"What's the gargle?" she asked crossly.

"Peroxide, dearie."

"H'm. Don't like it."

"Neither do I, but it cures, dearie," and Mrs. Valoise pulled her chair up to the side of the bed and laid a surprisingly cool hand on Mrs. Trimm's burning head.

Mrs. Trimm wriggled uncomfortably. She had never cared for that story of the Good Samaritan.

"You'll catch my sore throat," she warned weakly, wondering just why she hated Mrs. Valoise.

"I'll take a chance," Mrs. Valoise said cheerily, and rubbed Mrs. Trimm's head until that grateful but querulous lady went to sleep.

From that day Mrs. Valoise was a visitor in the sick room. On the seventh day Mrs. Trimm was sitting up and even smiling, tho a trifle grim and foreboding in appearance. On the ninth she tried to tell Mrs. Valoise of her gratefulness, but dare not because of a real horror born of the fear that Mrs. Valoise would tell her the Bible story about "turning the other cheek."

On the tenth day she held Mrs. Valoise's pudgy hand in her slim ones and even

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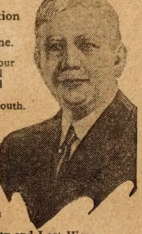

Are you suffering from lost vigor? Are you weak and worn out and can hardly drag around? Are your nerves "on edge" and you feel old and decrepit? These conditions need not be dreaded any longer since the discovery of Lifex Compound. Now it is often possible for lost vigor to be restored rapidly by the application of this compound which is meeting with wide success all over the country. This wonderful compound is restoring the "vigor of youth" to people of all ages and sexes where everything else had failed according to their own statements.

Morris L. Ebstone, proprietor of the Federal Optical Company, writes:

"I have used the Lifex Compound for only one week and I am proud to tell you that the vigor of my youth was restored to me the first day. It seemed to me my rejuvenation was instantaneous. Now my nerves are as steady as ever, and stomach trouble from which I have long suffered, has left me entirely. I have taken medicine for the last 15 years, have spent hundreds of dollars but can truthfully say that $2.00 spent for Lifex Compound has done me more good than all the rest put together."

Phillip Green of West Va., writes: "I have been taking your medicine for five days, and must say I am able to do things I have not done for ten months. I am feeling fine."

I confidently believe that this remarkable compound will "rejuvenate" any worn out, debilitated person, whether woman or man. Lifex Compound is the greatest tonic and tissue builder I ever saw. I want you to try it entirely at my risk. I know you'll be surprised and delighted with results, when you see how quickly it peps you up, then you'll say that the small price I ask is the best investment you ever made.

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Here is my personal offer to you! Sign and mail the coupon below. I will immediately send you a large Lifex Compound Treatment. Simply pay the postman only $1.97 plus a few cents postage when the package arrives. Use it for 14 days according to the simple directions. If you are not absolutely satisfied—yes, more than delighted with the results—if it has not lived up to every claim I make for it, I will refund not only your $1.97, but I will include 25 cents to pay you for your trouble in trying it. That's how sure I am that Lifex Compound will "rejuvenate" you. Act today—before this offer is withdrawn—and remember every statement I make is backed up by **My Iron-Clad GUARANTEE.** You can't possibly lose. I take all the risk. Cut off and mail the coupon today. Don't hesitate—don't delay—start on the road to health and happiness today.

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I accept your offer. Send me your regular treatment of Lifex Compound. Unless you find the money enclosed with this order, I will deposit $1.97 plus a few cents postage with the postman when the treatment is delivered. You agree to refund my money any time within 14 days, the full purchase price plus 25 cents for my trouble of trying it 14 days, if I am not amazed and delighted with results. I am to be the Whole Judge. (When money accompanies order, I pay postage.)

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No matter how bad your condition, no matter what your age or occupation, no matter what you have tried, if you are suffering from piles, I am so confident that Kuro Remedy will end these troubles that I want to send to every reader of this paper my big $1.00 treatment absolutely free. This treatment will not cost you one cent now, or any other time. There is nothing to pay the postman on delivery—it comes to you free and postpaid. I merely want to introduce my famous treatment to the thousands of sufferers from this dread disease.

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Dear Sir: Please send me by return mail your $1.00 treatment for Piles, which is never to cost me anything.

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Street or R.F.D.................................

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let a little moisture cloud her eyes.

On the eleventh day Mrs. Colby visited Mrs. Trimm for a rather interesting hour. Mrs. Trimm wore an old rose-colored dressing-gown, flicked a handkerchief from which emanated perfume of a strong variety and when questioned as to its source, replied:

"Mrs. Valoise, dearie; and do you know, she's a wonderful girl. To use her own expression, Mrs. Colby, dearie, she's absolutely O. K."

True Eloquence.

"He made an unusually good after-dinner speech."

"What did he say?"

"He said: 'Waiter, give me the check.'"

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Grocer—Well, little boy, what can I do for you?

Little Boy—Mother sent me to get change for a dollar, and said she would give you the dollar tomorrow.

Sympathy.

Fussy Old Dear—Conductor, are you quite sure this bus is going to Shepherd's Bush?

Conductor (wearily)—Well, if it ain't, lady, I'm in a worse mess than wot you are!

* * *

An Innocent Abroad.

As a ship was leaving the harbor of Athens a woman passenger approached the captain and pointing to the distant hills, asked: "What is that white stuff on the hills, captain?"

"That is snow, madam," answered the captain.

"Is it really?" remarked the woman. "I thought so, but a gentleman just told me it was Greece."

* * *

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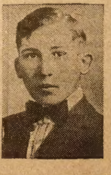
1, your name; 2, your address; 3, relation, if any, to lost person; 4, lost person's name; 5, age; 6, where last heard from; 7, when last heard from; 8, occupation, if any; 9, description.

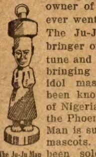
Our rate for inserting notice will be $1 for 35 words and 10c for every additional word in excess of 35. To reproduce a photograph there will be an extra charge of $1.

Address Lost Persons Editor, W. D. Boyce Co., 500 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.



Mrs. Lydia Tahnel, care of Commercial Hotel No. 2, Mondovi, Wisc., wishes to hear from, or concerning her son, Arthur Tahnel (also known as Arthur Cohnrel). Last heard from in Twin Brooks, So. Dak., and later supposed to have gone to Chicago. He is medium height; age, 26; has black hair and eyes and medium dark complexion; ears the least bit looped. Information concerning this party will be gratefully received by mother.

BE LUCKY!



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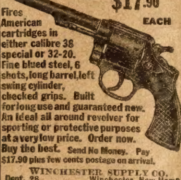

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33x4	4.00	1.75
34x4	4.25	1.85
32x4½	4.75	2.00
33x4½	5.00	2.25
34x4½	5.00	2.40
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33x5	5.75	2.60
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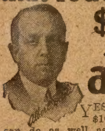

YES, you can make $100 a week. You can do as well as H. T. Pearl, of Okla., who made $750 in one month. You can begin like R. L. Marshall, of N. J., who made $80 in 5 hours. You don't have to invest any money, nor take a course, nor do any studying. You can start right in next week to enjoy a really big income. Do you want it? Then read this ad carefully and answer it at once.

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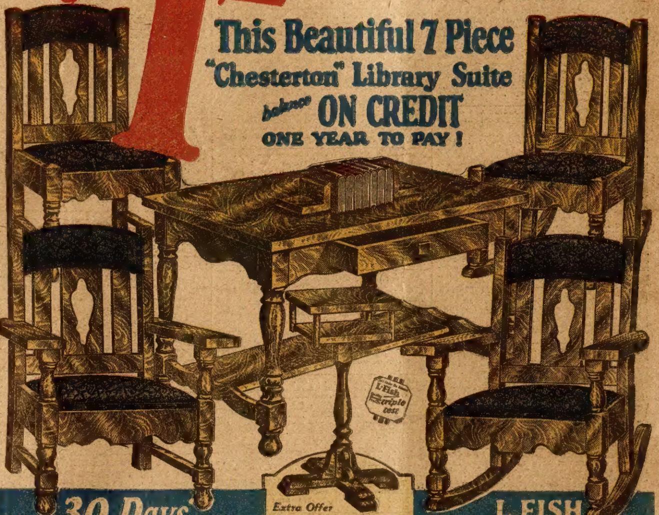

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